



# CARE AND LIVING IN COMMUNITY



**Follow-up research:  
Living together and care within CALICO**

January 2023

## Colophon

**Title:** Follow-up research: Living together and care within CALICO

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This report is an additional report produced after the three years of setting up CALICO and after the move of the inhabitants into the project. It addresses the first year of inhabitation of the project. It aims at learning lessons from daily practices of care within the co-housing project, in order to inform the development of similar projects in the future.

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In cooperation with the project consortium of CALICO:



With the support of:



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## I. Executive summary

This report is an additional and fifth report produced by the VUB in the context of its mission to monitor the CALICO project, a pilot project in Brussels that combines new forms of Care and Living in Community. The report was written as a conclusion to a fieldwork in the co-housing during its first year of inhabitation. The inhabitants of CALICO started moving in the apartments end of summer 2021, while the research resulting in this report took place between December 2021 and December 2022 thanks to the support of Bruxelles Logement. It aims at learning lessons from daily practices of care within the co-housing project, in order to inform the development of similar projects in the future.

The report starts describing some elements of the context of the co-housing project, its setting up and the four previous reports. For the new reader, the fourth report “Recommendation report on replicability, scaling-up and dissemination” (Dawance et al., 2022) offers a brief summary on the partners, housing tenure types, bodies of governance that could be a great interest to understand more in detail certain aspect evoked in the current report. Then we presented the research questions as followed: **“What is the role of ‘care’ within this cohousing project? What are the essential strengths and limits of supporting such intention within a co-housing project? And, more broadly, how can the concept of ‘care’ inform housing policy?”**. Starting from this research questions, the report was framed following the Ethics of Care of Tronto (1994, 2013). Tronto defines care as any activity we do to live as well as possible and she proposes a framework based on five steps in order to evaluate and improve the caring intention of a project or of the society as a whole. She presents her ethics as a process and as a goal which guide tangible practices and ethical principles.

The research followed an ethnographic and qualitative methodology to grasp the daily practices and to understand how all the issues and intentions discussed during the three years of set-up of CALICO are unfolding in the actual co-housing life. Semi structure interviewed were conducted with inhabitants affiliated in one of the three partner associations (CLTB, Angela.D and Pass-ages).

The core of the report uses the 5 steps of the ethics of care (Caring about, taking care of, care giving, care receiving, caring with) as a framework to discuss the care intention specific to CALICO. Each step answered to the related questions: 1. What are the societal needs that CALICO addresses? 2. How did the stakeholders settle their commitment towards these needs? 3. What were the tangible supports and actions that could achieve these commitments? 4. How and could the care receivers (the inhabitants) express their worry and limits about the project? 5. What were the essential relationships necessary to develop the co-housing project?

The first question was rather addressed to the three partner associations (CLTB, Angela.D and Pass-ages). It presented the intentions they identified as central for the co-housing project and on which they together committed themselves. Second, we discussed how the associations but also the associations together with the inhabitants created a series of tools to settle their commitment. The moment and the procedure of the housing selection appeared to be crucial for both the associations and the inhabitants to engage their responsibility in the caring co-housing project. The third section (care giving) presented three tangible elements of the co-housing thanks to which and through which the caring project could actually be achieved. The governance model offers a structure and moments for the inhabitants to meet and to actually participate in the project. The space essentially the collective spaces including the circulation were discussed as essential to develop a collective and caring environment. The diversity of profiles of inhabitants (with different competences, life trajectories and cultural backgrounds) constituted, thanks to this diversity, a support to envisage a caring environment. Also, thanks to the diversity, inhabitants could alternatively be defined as in need or as care givers according to the situation encountered. These three elements were at the same time essential tangible achievements (a governance model, an architecture, a group of inhabitants) while offering the moments, the places, the situations where caring relationships could take place.

The two last steps of the caring cycle addressed the tensions and the limits of the project in its faculty to care about the inhabitants in first place, but also beyond. In the section “care receiving”, we addressed three sort of gatekeepers that, so far, have ensured a certain assessment of the project: by everyday knowing more about each other, the inhabitants maintain among themselves a constant attentiveness; by appointing professionals they could question, listen and propose actions to better fit the needs of the inhabitants; and by strengthening the faculty of inhabitants to reflect about the limits of the project. Finally, the fifth step pointed at some major challenges in terms of power relations that face the two main relationships discussed in this report: the relation among inhabitants and the one between inhabitants and associations. The fifth step also enlarged the focus to the space as a potential caring infrastructure and to the other persons in need who could not find their way in the housing project. The report concluded with potential recommendations we could retrieve from these five steps.

## II. Introduction

This report provides the results of the follow-up study of the CALICO project and was written more than 1 year after the project ended in October 2021. CALICO, CAre and Living in Community, was one of the 22 Urban Innovative Action laureates from the third wave, funded by the European Union's European Regional Development Fund (ERFD). The UIA-funding for the project started in November 2018 and finished end of October 2021 and during this period an extensive scientific evaluation composed of four reports was conducted (Dawance et al., 2019, 2022; Smetcoren et al., 2020, 2022). CALICO is a co-housing initiative aimed to develop affordable housing for specific vulnerable groups within a caring environment in Brussels Capital Region. It was led by the Brussels Capital Region and Community Land Trust Brussels. During the development of the project proposal the intentions were formulated together with the different partner organisations. The project was developed as an answer to the 3<sup>rd</sup> European Urban Innovative Actions call<sup>1</sup> and as such, it fixed certain rules concerning the criteria for the housing allocation, the time frame allocated to the setup of the project and the budget frame dedicated to human resources and building costs. The goals, design, implementation, and outcomes of the project have been extensively discussed in previous evaluation reports. This intensive co-construction process is central to understand how CALICO resulted today. This following additional report contributes to the Brussels Capital Region's aim to learn from the innovative housing approach and to nourish the debate on contemporary social problems related to housing.

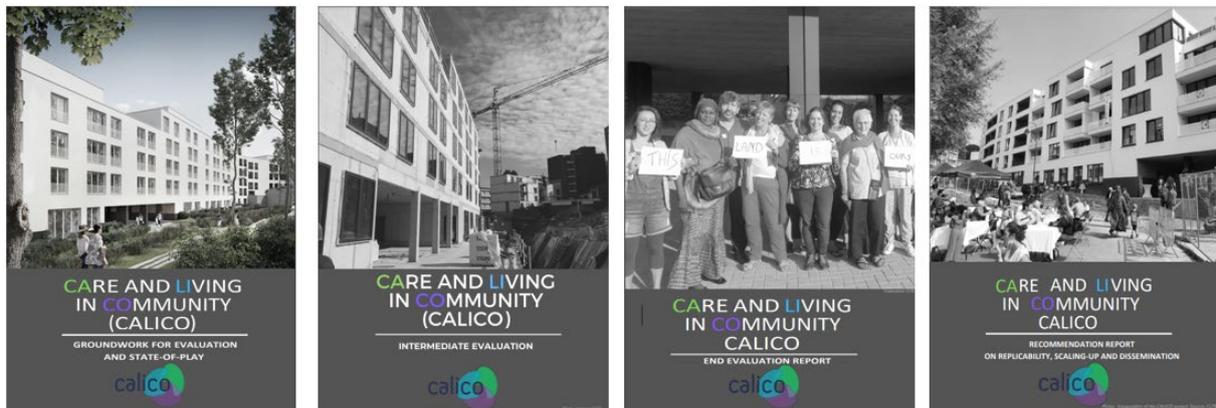


Image1: The four previous reports on CALICO (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022)

## Aim and Research question

### **The aim of the research**

This report is based on follow-up research taking place after the inhabitants moved in the CALICO project. Mainly due to the Covid pandemic and delay with construction works, the first three years of research (November '18 – October '21) did not have the occasion to monitor and to analyse the project inhabited as residents moved into the project at the end of august 2021. Therefore, this report is discussing seven months of fieldwork in the housing during the period of April '22 and October '22. At first the aim was to monitor the daily life within CALICO and how the partner organisations provide guidance to the residents during the first year of habitation. The follow-up research started from the initial values and intentions driving the project, more specifically care; gender; intergenerational, socio-economic and cultural diversity; anti-speculation, questioning how these have been applied and impacting the housing project collectively and individually. However, during the research the concept of care gained importance, leading to the question **“What is the role of ‘care’ within this cohousing project? What are the essential strengths and limits of supporting such intention within a co-housing project? And, more broadly, how can the concept of ‘care’ inform housing policy?”**

The CALICO project was led by a consortium of 8 principal partners (CLTB, Bruxelles Logement, Pass-ages, Angela.D, Eva bxl, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Perspective.Brussels, AIS Logement pour Tous) and 4 associated partners (municipality of Forest, CPAS, Diogènes, Rézone). Some of these partners joined during the implementation phase but are no longer taking part in the project today (EVA bxl). The present study analysed and worked together with

<sup>1</sup> <https://uia-initiative.eu/en/theme/housing>

those organisations that are still involved, supporting and maintaining frequent contacts with inhabitants (CLTB, Angela.D, Pass-ages, Logement pour Tous, Diogènes, Rézone).

This report is structured as follows. The first part starts with a brief introduction on the theoretical foundation of the ethics of care. Next it presents the research methodology, followed with the body of the research. The results of the first year of inhabiting CALICO are presented and the findings are organised according to the analytical framework following Tronto's five stages of caring: Caring about, Taking care of, Care-giving, Care-receiving, Caring with. It describes and discusses the everyday organisation of CALICO as a caring process. The last part of the report addresses recommendations for housing policy deduced from the five stages of caring.

### **Introduction to the ethics of care**

From the beginning of the project, CALICO, meaning 'Care and Living in Community' was not identified as a project where the focus was solely on providing "affordable housing" but immediately the emphasis was placed on care, on creating a caring housing project. The care was tangibly translated in the birth and end-of-life facilities, but also intended as informal care and self-care, social cohesion, autonomy of inhabitants and a new model of governance. Building on this, the hypothesis was stated that creating a caring housing project goes beyond one or several objectives but rather initiates a caring mindset, promoting an ethics of care. Therefore, **the work of Joan Tronto** and her model of caring appeared to be an interesting framework to organize and to analyse the data collected during the grounded research in CALICO. Her work is central in the development of a caring community and interesting in the context of collaborative housing. In that sense, the care intention of CALICO can be associated with the definition of care by Tronto and Fischer:

*Care is "a species' activity that includes everything we do to maintain, continue, and repair our world so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web" (Fisher & Tronto 1990, p. 40)*

Starting by defining care as essential and everywhere, Tronto proposes a new ethics to build a just city. It involves caring in this broad and fundamental sense. She explains that, on one side, the human being has the desire to take care of others, it is something imminently human. On the other side, society has been developing structures/ways on how care should be organised (creating households as a first caring unit, through education, providing and regulating health care, taking care of young, sick, older people by communities, by church, by states, etc). For many reasons, the state has taken over these care organizations and responsibilities, one by one, without having a systemic and structural view on it. Tronto sees the care commitment as expressed in **both tangible actions and ethical principles**. In addition, her research demonstrates that care work is supported unequally in the population. Care work is a less valued, under paid and given for a vast amount to a population with a "lower status" in our society (women, slaves, working class people, immigrants). These insights pushed her to propose a new ethic of care questioning how society (or communities) organizes and distributes democratically the responsibility of care. Also she questions how the greatest participation of citizens can be ensured. According to her, these questions should be placed at the centre of democratic politics. "Hence, the extent to which a caring democracy and a solidarity-oriented caring culture in society is realized and promoted indicates the degree to which a society's political system is democratic as a whole" (Tronto, 2013 as cited in Wegleitner et al., 2015, p. 106). The ethic of care advocates to (re)distribute the responsibility of care among the entire society. **Ethics of care is an obligation** all individuals have towards the world. As such, it is a precept that joins the recognition of social inequalities and the redistributive intention of social housing as an answer to these inequalities.

According to Tronto, care is not an individual activity, it is **a relational practice** between subjects, which is part of a constant and ongoing process. It is driven by ethical principles through embodied practices. "In this interaction, possibilities for change arise for the transformations of how humans relate to each other and to places, and in doing so, construct new subjectivities. This raises the importance of the role of values, beliefs, and mindsets that determine not only the possibility to act differently, but also to wish differently." (Moriggi et al., 2020, p. 3). Investigating CALICO from an ethics of care perspective will both deepen our understanding of CALICO and advance a new normative framework (Sevenhuijsen, 2003) that could eventually inform housing policy.

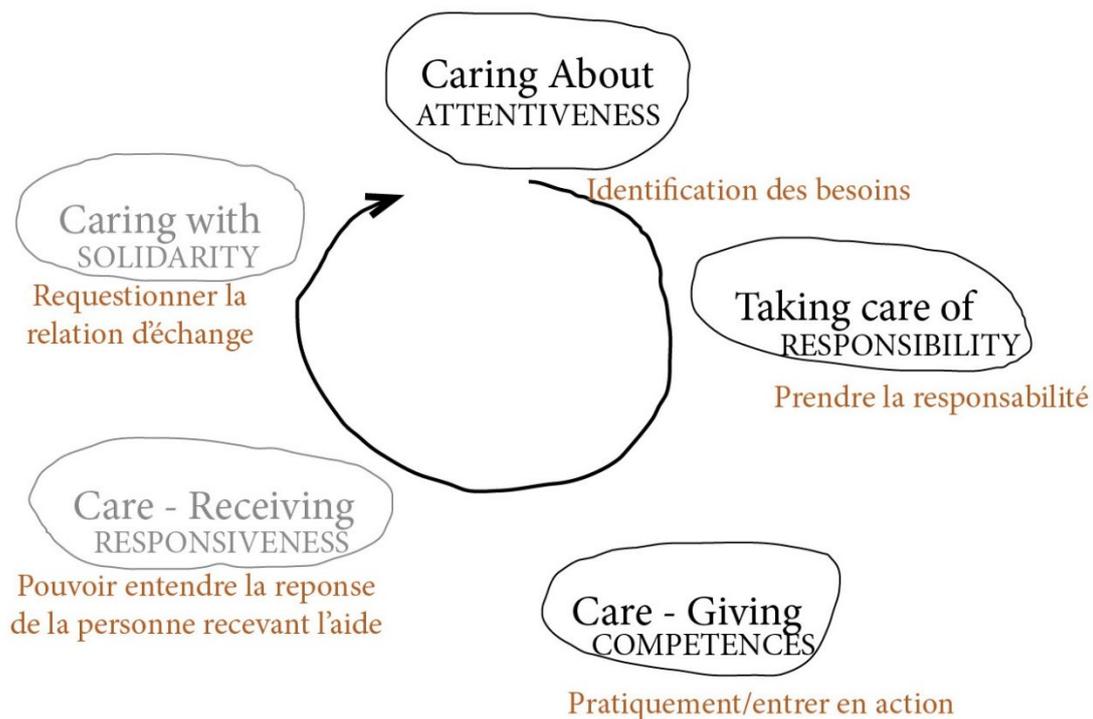


Image 2: Scheme representing the five stages of caring. Source: J. Mosseray inspired by J.Tronto

For this framework, the five phases to achieve the ethics of care of Tronto (2013) are specifically interesting: five practices of care that entail five ethical elements. First, *caring about* consists in the capacity of **being attentive** in order to recognize the needs of others. The ethics of care imposes citizens to be attentive and to recognize the needs of other. Second, *taking care of* points at assuming the responsibility for the needs. It refers to the commitments and the claim for care that the person, or the group engage in. Thirdly, *care-giving* is pointing at the effective work of care and the necessary competencies developed in order to achieve it. According to Tronto, it is good to recognize needs, to claim to take care of these needs, but it is then necessary to be able to really take care of them. She makes a distinction between a claim for and a real competence to achieve it. Then, to make sense of **the mutual reciprocal relationship** developed between the two sides of the caring spectrum, she proposes two more stages. Fourthly, *care-receiving* is the capacity to respond of the beneficiary. The responsiveness entails to recognize the vulnerability and the unequal relationships that constitutes a care relation. “To be in a situation where one needs care is to be in a position of some vulnerability. It belies the myth that we are always autonomous, and potentially equal citizens” (Tronto, 1994, p. 136). According to Tronto, assuming equality ignores important dimension of human existence. Therefore, “the moral precept of **responsiveness requires that we remain alert to the possibilities for abuse that arise with vulnerability**”. It points at the ineluctable inequality, relationships of authority, domination and subordination and that total independence and autonomy does not exist. With this principle Tronto reminds us of the necessity to consider “the other” and the “otherness” instead of presuming “that people are interchangeable”(Tronto, 1994, p. 136). “Adequate responsiveness requires attentiveness” states Tronto, starting a new care cycle process. The limit of the responsiveness appears when the care receiver is not able to respond. This pushed Tronto (2013) to, fifthly, include *Caring with* which encompass the entire care process. It imposes to zoom out and reflect on the multiple and entire care relationships, recognizing “care receivers’ dignity and knowledge, and, additionally, creates the necessary conditions for empowerment through processes of learning that may benefit all.” (Moriggi et al., 2020, p. 4). The principles attached to this stage are trust, respect, and solidarity, which are at the base of mutually beneficial relationship. The CALICO project was screened based on this framework of Ethics of Care and its 5 phases, to study if such project can be identified as an innovating new subjectivity.

## IV. Research methodology

### ***Background of the research methodology***

As this follow-up research is developed by the same research centres involved in the previous evaluation, it presents a continuity of the previous research. At the same time, a new researcher was appointed to do the research, which meant she had to redevelop a trust relation with inhabitants and other stakeholders, to find her place in the field, and to build on the previous reports in order to capture the collective history of the project. It appeared to be particularly interesting to enter the project with new competences, launching an approach centred on the inhabitants' experiences.

Initially, the aim of the follow-up research was to approach the project from three perspectives: the ones of the residents, the ones of the associations and fieldwork professionals and the ones of the institutional stakeholders. The research was finally mainly oriented to the everyday organisation of CALICO, the relationship between inhabitants among each other and the relationship between inhabitants and the fieldwork professionals of the associations. The institutional stakeholders were already consulted in the study that led to the fourth report, which includes recommendations on the replicability of the CALICO project (Dawance et al., 2022).

The method for this study was essentially based on the methods of participant observation and interviews. The political, financial and legal aspects of the project were less or only addressed from the perceptions of the inhabitants, and thus these will not be addressed exhaustively in this report. Rather, the participant observation and the interviews permitted to collect data on what were the individual and collective needs of the inhabitants initially, their expectations concerning the project, the responsibility they were willing to take in the project and how they assume these responsibilities daily. The report discusses the daily organisation and the supporting elements that make possible the realisation of the CALICO intentions. We more specifically addressed the relationships developed among the inhabitants, between the sub-groups of inhabitants, between the inhabitants and the associative stakeholders (fieldwork professionals or project managers and association board) and finally the relation between the inhabitants and the built environment. More generally, the elements discussed in this report are not exhaustive or illustrative of one reality. These should be rather conceived as points of discussion and interest during this first year of life of CALICO.

### ***Data collection methods of the everyday life***

In the beginning of 2022, time was dedicated to analysing the previous research reports and in pointing at the tangible questions that could be addressed in this present report. Furthermore, the researcher entered in the archive of the extensive data collection that resulted from the three years of setting up the project. During these years, all meetings' minutes, presentations, letter of intent, legal procedures, financial calculations, plans, working packages, public declarations were archived on a Google drive accessible by the project managers and leading stakeholders. On another Google drive, which was only accessible to the researchers involved, the material concerning the monitoring and evaluation of the project was saved. This includes the analysis of the questionnaires filled in by the inhabitants, the in-depth interviews, the focus groups, etc. We did not apply a singular method in order to navigate through all this material, but it was an important source to understand the specifications of the project and to fall back on over the course of the fieldwork.

The fieldwork was conducted by the first author of this report (Jeanne Mosseray). Before being invited to General Assemblies of CALICO, the fieldwork started with several encounters with professionals through CALICO follow-up committees, project manager meetings and interviews with project managers. The researcher was formally introduced to the inhabitants during the CALICO General Assembly of May '22. Since that meeting, it was easier to participate more liberally in informal moments and meetings. During the six following months, we attended working groups (such as the kids working group, common spaces working group, Rézone working group, Charter working group) and inhabitants' General Assemblies. The researcher was sometimes asked to help structuring the meetings and often used to take care of the meeting minutes. We took up a similar role as the project managers during these moments. The fieldwork was the occasion to attend meetings organised by Angela.D regarding their Feminist Summer project, to participate in the open-door days of Pass-ages as these moments were opened to everyone. Or to participate more systematically in the Wednesday breakfast at Delta, which were opportunities to initiate discussions with inhabitants, to meet inhabitants and to grasp a sense of what it is to live in CALICO. In addition to these moments, during three entire days, observations in the collective spaces of CALICO were organised.

At different moment of the week, we mapped, traced, and observed the covered courtyard and the street. The meetings and other activities were also the occasion to visit the collective spaces as well as the private ones.

Finally, a series of individual in-depth interviews (16) were organised; 14 with inhabitants and two with the project managers of CLTB and Angela.D. Table 1 presents an overview of the main characteristics of the interviewees. The 15 inhabitants' interviews offer a certain representativity of the composition of the 34 households and 39 adults of CALICO. Unfortunately, none of the two inhabitants from Diogènes could be interviewed. The interviews followed a topics list that included the everyday activities in the co-housing, the sub-group organisation, the intentions of the project, the use of the space, and personal trajectory of live. All participants were made aware of the nature of the research, the extent of their involvement and how the data would be processed. They agreed voluntarily to participate in the research and all participants agreed by signing an informed consent. Also, the interviews with the inhabitants were the occasion to visit the apartments and circulation spaces. In addition to the recorded semi-structured interviews, many discussions (sometimes very long and intimate) with other inhabitants (that are not listed here) were engaged and helped to cross the data collected during interviews. The interviews and discussions represent important parts of the data, in addition to the observation systematically collected in a notebook. The interviews were analysed using MaxQDA software. The transcription of all the interviews was done by the first author and consisted in a deep familiarisation of the data. Then codes were generated searching for redundant or unique themes within the interviews. The themes were then crossed with the notes of the observations.

Table 1: Overview of the participants of in-depth interviews

	<b>Housing cluster</b>	<b>Personal characteristics</b>	<b>Transcription</b>	
1	Angela.D	Woman, tenant, about 40	Transcribed verbatim	R1
2	Angela.D	Woman, tenant, about 60	Transcribed verbatim	R2
3	Angela.D	Woman, tenant, about 60	Transcribed verbatim	R3
4	Angela.D	Woman, tenant, about 60	Edited transcription	R4
5	CLTB	Woman, owner, about 40	Transcribed verbatim	R5
6	CLTB	Woman, owner, about 30	Transcribed verbatim	R6
7	CLTB	Woman, owner, about 40	Transcribed verbatim	R7
8	CLTB	Woman, tenant, about 60	Transcribed verbatim	R8
9	CLTB	Woman, tenant, about 50	Edited transcription	R9
10	Pass-ages	Woman, shareholder, about 30	Transcribed verbatim	R10
11	Pass-ages	Man, shareholder, about 30	Transcribed verbatim	R11
12	Pass-ages	Woman, tenants, about 50	Transcribed verbatim	R12
13	Pass-ages	2 Women, shareholder and tenant	Edited transcription	R13
14	Pass-ages	Woman, tenants, about 60	Edited transcription	R14
A1	CLTB	Project manager	Not recorded - Edited transcription	R15
A2	Angela.D	Project manager	Edited transcription	R16

## V. First year of inhabiting CALICO Care and Living in Community

### A. *Caring about – Attentiveness: identifying the needs*

Caring about involves the attentiveness and the capacity to notice unmet needs. It corresponds to the concerns and reasons that actors express when engaging in the process. In this section, we answer to the question: What are the collective and individual needs addressed by CALICO? How have the project initiators and the inhabitants been defining these needs?

We identified two types of needs. The first ones are discussed together as they are situated at the level of the society. The societal context imposes the associations to situate their caring project and the needs they want to address through CALICO within the larger housing needs of society. The second type of needs and intentions are the ones translated and understood by the inhabitants; taking some distance from those defined by the associations.

#### 1. Needs of affordable and qualitative housing and beyond

##### *Needs within the housing crisis context*

Within the housing context of Brussels, an important part of the population is in need of affordable and qualitative housing (at least already the 50.000 households on the waiting list) (Bernard et al., 2009; Observatoire de la santé et du social Bruxelles, 2021). The households in need of such housing accumulate a variety of vulnerabilities. At present, the main affordable housing provider (the social housing companies) aims at offering housing to the most precarious households, following a list of criteria, starting with their socio-economical vulnerability. Nevertheless, as the production is slow and the waiting list long, the few new housings are not able to answer to the general housing need (Van de Castele, 2021) and even less to specific populations. The housing system, as it is organized today, **is not designed to take care of various additional needs residents may have** (such as health, employment, childcare, education). The latter are tackled by complementary associations and services. And it is even more pressing for people such as ex-prisoners, drug addicts, homeless, women who are victims of violence and undocumented people, who do not easily find their way within the classical social housing system (Dawance et al., 2022).

At the level of the regional statistics, beside the monitoring of poverty (Observatoire de la Santé et du Social de Bruxelles-Capitale, 2021), of households on the social housing waiting list and of the housing cost, **there is no structural understanding of the adjacent, intersectional needs related to the one of housing**. The population in need is most often described in terms of incomes, while the first line associative network of Brussels identifies a diversity of needs related to housing (see also Lenel et al., 2020). As an answer to this, the associations specialize in certain target populations: homeless people, unaccompanied people under 18, young adults, disabled people, older people, undocumented people, women that are victim of violence, single parents (often mothers) (Observatoire de la santé et du social de Bruxelles-Capitale, 2019). Starting from their needs, these associations try to develop finetuned housing projects. CALICO appeared as one of this finetuned housing project.

CALICO by identifying specific intentions and needs introduces a new logic based on the recognition of individual needs. It entails that no one can speculate about the intensity of someone's need without knowing the person, and that the care need can only be well addressed thanks to a personal and individual attention and relationship.

##### *Needs tackled by the associations within CALICO*

The associations<sup>2</sup> responsible for the three housing clusters within CALICO (CLTB, Angela.D, Pass-ages) **identified specific societal and community needs related to their experiences in the field**. These needs were developed as complementary or intersectional to the affordable and qualitative housing need. Each of the associations, due to their specific interest, position and attention, more or less represents certain intentions. Nevertheless, they collectively agreed on to define the following list of intentions to characterise the *Care and Living in Community* project.

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<sup>2</sup> The three associations are CLTB, Angela.D and Pass-ages. CLTB recently became a public operator, but in this report, we will essentially address CLTB as an associative community development.

### **Anti-speculative**

This intention, supported through the expertise of CLTB and applied to the entire CALICO project, gives a very large and structural answer to the need of housing in the region at a short, medium and long terms. In short terms, it provides affordable housing for households in need. In medium terms, it develops a governance approach based on the commons and a model against speculation in the housing sector. In long terms, it secures the affordability of housing for ever, affecting the society at large.

### **Life cycles or Birth and end-of-life facilities**

Through the setting up of the birth and end-of-life facilities by Pass-ages the project aims at questioning and offering another way **to take care** of crucial moments of life transition, with a specific attention to birth and end-of-life. The facilities embody an alternative **societal vision** on how these moments of life are taking place and supported in our contemporary society outside the classical healthcare system, which at present is mainly organized by formal organisations (hospitals, healthcare professionals, etc). Their intention is to bring care that exists around these two life events back into the community, allowing care to take place not only in a more home-like environment, but where professional help is complemented and seen as equal with informal help, provided by volunteers, neighbours, etc.

### **Gender**

The gender intention was brought by the association Angela.D, which was created by professionals witnessing the difficult access to housing for women. They decided to make this situation visible, by voluntarily only addressing women in one cohousing cluster (100% women in 9 apartments). Besides the inhabitants of this cluster, the project accommodates a majority of women. The gender intention in CALICO is twofold, it aims at offering an answer to the large housing need of women and, by addressing and naming this need, at offering a societal vision to rethink the position of women and men in our society. Angela.D carries a message going beyond the project CALICO and defends a feminist perspective on housing policy.

### **Intergenerational living**

The housing project was conceived as an intergenerational project, especially targeting a growing ageing population. This ageing population (especially women) often relies on low pensions and have a vulnerable position in the housing market. They often prefer to age in a home environment, rather than in a residential care facility. By offering intergenerational housing, the project tries to create such home environment and tries to stimulate caring relations between the older and younger generation. The birth and end-of-life facilities further amplifies this aim.

### **Care**

Care is mentioned in the name of the project and is reflected upon by all the stakeholders. Associations and inhabitants concretize 'care' according to their principal objectives (palliative care, intergenerational care, care workload, everyday care). As such, for example, sometimes care is discussed in terms of unequal distribution of care workload, sometimes it is discussed in terms of an alternative to institutionalized health care in the end-of-life facility. As it was earlier defined by Tronto, care is everywhere for everyone, therefore, in CALICO, care can also be associated with an ethical obligation shared by the community.

### **Neighbourhood**

CALICO aims at being more than a project attentive to the needs of only its inhabitants. The intention is to be open and attentive to the neighbourhood and to offer services that are needed. Also as CALICO moved in the newest building of the neighbourhood and as the construction of the building engendered strong reactions from the vicinity, the attention to the neighbourhood was essential. The creation of the space "Delta" is a direct translation of this attention for the neighbourhood.

In addition to these clearly expressed intentions found in the CALICO brochure, the housing project also aims at developing **a multicultural** housing project, **a solidarity project**, a project of **social cohesion** and an **autonomous** project. All these aspects remain essential for all stakeholders (as expressed in the application form to UIA) but are not specifically supported by one association, neither are they as countable or tangible than the previous list of intentions.

Not expressed as an intention in the brochure but framing CALICO is the aim to answer to the housing needs of precarious households. The main challenge highlighted by CALICO from the project proposal was "the housing

situation and the quality of life of specific vulnerable groups”. The authors of the project application pointed at the difficulty the following groups “**the ageing population**”, “**women particularly older women**”, “**migrant**” and “**low-income families**” have in affording qualitative housing. These groups were then translated by the associations into the explicit categories of older people, women in precarity and households below the income threshold of social housing. Nevertheless, identifying and characterizing target groups also increases the risk to erase the complexity and intersectional needs that composes these target groups.

All these intentions all together address **broad needs**. Their definition and the way to actually address them will be refined by the associations and the inhabitants. This continuous process of definition and redefinition of needs and translating these needs into embodied practices are at the core of the innovation of CALICO. It is what defines the specificity of the project. At the same time, it constitutes also the main difficulty of the project.

The example of the feminist project of Angela.D is illustrative in that sense. The partners often questioned the meaning of the gender intention and how this could constitute an embodied practice, in comparison to the tangible development of an end-of-life facility or to an anti-speculation intention. The gender mainstreaming intention was initially translated by the presence of “precarious women” in the project. A target group that is still very difficult to frame by the association and difficult to defend by the women who do not easily refer to themselves in such term.

## 2. Attentiveness of the inhabitants

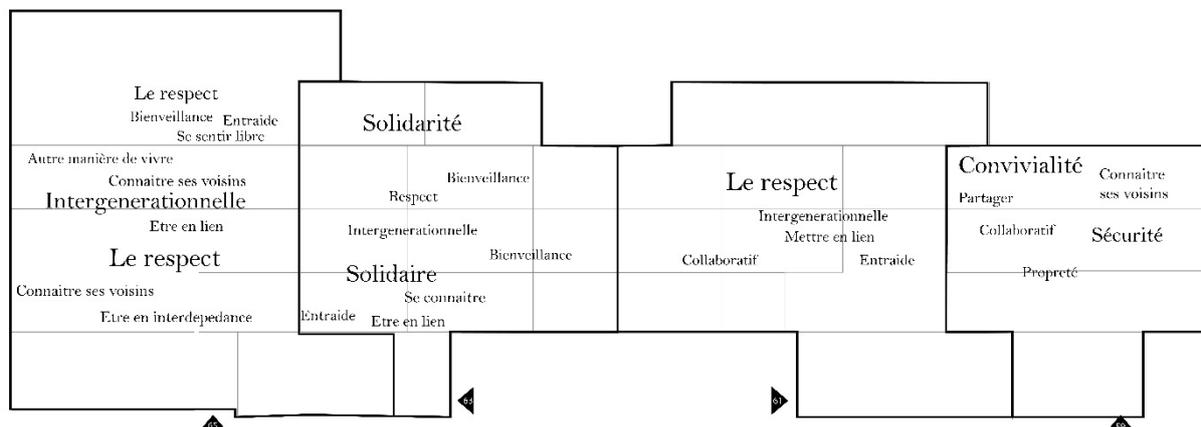


Image 3: Scheme of the terms that inhabitants associate with the care intention expressed. The terms are localized in the simplified façade according to the part of the building the interviewee inhabits.

The previous list of intentions defined by the associations is taken as a given by the inhabitants, and therefore not really discussed. In general, they agree with this understanding of the societal needs and are more sensible to one or another element according to their own situation and believes. All dimensions seemed to make sense for them. Yet, few of the intentions are reused as such by the inhabitants. Intention such as the anti-speculation does not sound very central for the inhabitants. Others such as intergenerational and gender are seized, while care is reinterpreted, translated or rephrased in other terms.

*“I would like to stay here and to invest my time here. I want to live here quietly and share more with the other inhabitants. This is a good project, I think a very good project, that could improve life. But it is also necessary to explain to each other that it is a collective project” (R8)*

All interviewees expressed to feel a caring responsibility towards each other. Some would phrase it as lending a key or answering to specific requests, while others see it as a proactive support such as developing a food collection or events for children. They feel being part of a respectful and caring project. They expressed their intention within the co-housing project to take care for others based on (intergenerational) solidarity, on respect, benevolence, feeling secure, etc. and based on everyday practices: knowing each other, showing respect, collaborating with each other, sharing, helping and supporting each other.

*“Care” I admit that it is a vague concept for me. I understand it but what is it exactly? Ok we are all here together, we are going to help each other, and we are going to look after the*

*others, be benevolent. But I admit that it is a little bit vague for me as it seems to relate to a natural attitude towards the others.” (R11)*

## **B. Taking care of – responsibility**

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This second step of the care circle distinguishes the first step being to recognize needs and this second one discussing what are the responsibility taken by the stakeholder. It looks at the claim to take care of these needs. At this stage, it is not yet the actual tangible acts of caring that is discussed but rather the frame or the contract imposed or decided by the stakeholders.

The intentions, defined at the beginning of the project, were directly translated into commitments to “taking care of” the needs, by the associations and by the inhabitants. First, commitments were developed by the associations. They demonstrate how the three associations collectively take up their responsibility to answer to the needs defined in the first step. Secondly, on the level of inhabitants, results identified three ways the engagement to take care of the needs were translated for all the inhabitants of CALICO, for the ones of Angela.D and for the ones of Pass-ages.

### **1. Associative responsibility**

The associations **worked with quotas** in order to translate their commitment. The quotas were an important tool, although sometimes too rigid to carefully address certain situations. They could translate the intentions to intergenerational solidarity by including a minimum percentage of older people, to feminist values by including only women in one housing cluster, to economic solidarity by including a minimum percentage of low-income households and of homeless people. Other intentions such as addressing women precariousness, caring solidarity or multiculturalism, were less tangible and were not translatable by quota.

A second engagement impelled by the associations are expressed through **their societal visions**. The three associations are developing visions large enough to be transversal in society and **specific enough to inspire future inhabitants to join the project**. Pass-ages requests the health care system and promotes the deinstitutionalisation of health care by introducing birth and end-of-life facilities in the community and managed by community members. Angela.D defends the feminist value and a social, equal, intercultural, ecological and solidarity-based vision. CLTB defends an anti-speculative vision, where housing creation should not support a capitalist but rather a common aim. Each association goes beyond the only recognition of needs and support larger societal vision. Further in the report, results will show that each reaffirms its vision through different mechanisms (charter, practices, discourses). Even more, this first year of CALICO demonstrated that these visions went beyond the three associations and their members, and that they percolated and arose interest across the inhabitants.

### **2. Engagement of the CALICO inhabitants**

The caring responsibilities within the project have been translated differently according to the associations and according to the willingness of inhabitants. However, **naming and expressing clearly the intentions** through the **project name “CALICO Care and Living in Community”** appeared to be the first claim to aim to take care. With “CALICO”, all inhabitants are reminded about their commitment ‘to take care about’, and this commitment could not be ignored. Although some inhabitants denounced the continuous repetition of this vague concept; or found it hard to grasp what they exactly entail. It appeared that expressing and naming these concepts imposed to each one to position her/himself towards these values.

*“So “CALICO”, what does that mean? “Care and living in community”, ok... first it is in English so it is a bit difficult to understand. Then I questioned it also because it was an association that developed the project and not all the inhabitants, but now little by little it is organized, we [the inhabitants] start to be involved.” (R7)*

The setup of **a care committee** in order to co-create the CALICO community care model has opened a reflection on how concretely translated the caring engagement. Since they moved in, the committee did not take place as such anymore, but the discussions initiated during these meetings have borne fruit. **The thematic of care was reaffirmed,**

**discussed and defined.** For example, the food collection project emanated from these discussions. As such, the care committee appeared to be a concrete way to include care responsibilities in the daily life.

**The writing of charters (Care charter and CALICO charter)** was a third way to collectively concretize the care commitment. Inhabitants refer to them very differently. Some agree on the merits of its existence but do not refer to it and look forward to concretizing these principles. The charter working group on its side, is very sensitive and attached to it. They see the document as central and necessary to share trust. The **mandates** inhabitants assume as members of the charter working group (or of the care committee) appeared to entail a more profound responsibilities of its members. Even though the membership is reduced to a simple presence in the working group, it steers a feeling of empowerment and an interest in the topic.

*“We all signed a charter with our values [the interviewee was part of the working group in charge]. In principle, any new inhabitant will be informed about it, it is also on this base that he/she will accept to become part of CALICO. (...) For me, this is very important, it is on this charter that I can believe, that I can trust my neighbours. Because I know that we share common values. (...) for me this is the base, but I'm not sure everyone thinks the same.” (R3)*

Another common commitment of all inhabitants relates to the **building management**, concerning the duty to clean the collective spaces (stairs, entrances, the collective space “CALICO apartment”, sidewalk) and to manage anything that requires a collective approach (such as the garbage, the purchase of the filter for the ventilation system, the sunshade installation). Although this commitment sounds as low threshold, it is **perceived and achieved differently**. For many, it is considered as an essential task of a co-housing as the very basis of respect and care towards others. Others would rather propose the externalising of the task or would propose to one inhabitant to be paid for the service, while others would simply not see it as a responsibility. These different takes on the matter entail a real vision on the role of care practices within society.

Also the moment of the **housing selection procedure represents the central stage** where the engagement and responsibilities should be formulated. For CALICO and CLTB, the lesson is learned from this first year that there is a necessity to clarify the responsibility of inhabitants from the selection procedure. While for Angela.D and Passages, it is already the moment where responsibilities are announced and/or agreed upon. Until today, the CLTB households were selected due to their eligible criteria (quotas), due to a minimum information on the project, by signing charters (not compulsory), by maintaining the building, by engaging in a minimum participation in meetings. Today, for whole inhabitants of CALICO, their commitments are not clearly ruled.

*For me, actually, I would prefer a clear commitment, this would help me to save time and to avoid feeling guilty. Because once you have done your job, it is fine, I get rid of it. And nobody would comment on it. But here, now, the frame is vague... so then we do not really know what is expected from us. (R1)*

It slightly oscillates between an obligation imposed or suggested by the associations and an obligation felt by the inhabitants themselves. It constantly questions whether a project **offering social housing can impose a minimum engagement of the beneficiaries**. For the future, it could be discussed whether future inhabitants should understand project intentions and defend them, agree on shared values and societal vision.

### 3. Engagement of Angela.D inhabitants

In addition to the CALICO responsibility, Angela.D has additional commitment. Practically the responsibilities are accepted by the future inhabitant during the selection procedure, but then, they have been refined by the inhabitants and association during different meetings. It is still under continuous co-construction.

First, during the selection procedure, **the future tenants were invited to defend their application and to share their feminist vision** to the association board and to the already selected inhabitants, which could eventually result into a collective project. One inhabitant explained the difficulty to measure or to perceive the motivation of future inhabitant and to concretize her engagement. She questioned what the base of her engagement should be “to be an activist, to be a feminist?” and how it should or could be measured, when they engaged to promote gender equality.

*"[Talking about a neighbour selected before her] Her project was clearer than mine, she is an artist, she expresses it [her engagement] through her art. Her project was certainly more attractive. (...) There are many issues here, there are the personal concerns, concerns regarding the project, and we can all have very different expectations. In reality, I think what links us a lot... Because the inhabitants here we were not recognized as feminist before, some of us yes, but not all. Actually, we arrived here because we were in a precarious situation in a specific moment of our life and at the same time, we had an attraction towards a project like this one. What I want to say is that there are many aspects that intertwine here." (R1)*

Then, during that same procedure, the future inhabitants are invited to become a member of the Angela.D association and to sign **the Angela.D charter**. These impositions do not imply more than an expression of commitment, and do not impose any additional obligation. They invoked their own capacity to guarantee their care engagement. If some would like to see a collective and equal engagement among the inhabitants, so far, the group did not find a way to share systematically their individual responsibilities to take care of others with the other inhabitants.

In addition, beside the selection procedure, **by living in proximity in a co-housing and by organizing monthly meetings and other activities**, appeared to maintain and nourish a collective claim for care. Since the beginning of 2022, Angela.D (inhabitants and association) has concretized their feminist vision by developing feminist activities and workshops, open to CALICO inhabitants and outsiders. However, as the association board of Angela.D is composed of a majority of members who don't inhabit the project, they are concerned about not imposing these activities or participation in meetings. At the same time, they expect the inhabitants to engage in one or another way. So far, **the selection procedure, the charter and the non-obligatory participation to activities** are considered as a good in-between: not imposing participation while collectively agreeing on a vision under continuous construction

#### 4. Engagement of Pass-ages inhabitants

On its side, the association Pass-ages has been reflecting on an additional layer of 'taking care of', specifically attached to the birth and end-of-life facilities. The facilities are essentially based on voluntary work and imposes a larger responsibility on the shoulders of the 10 households of Pass-ages. The responsibility imposed by the facilities and the one imposed by being an inhabitant of Pass-ages are not distinguished one from the other.

The main difference of Pass-ages compared to CLTB and Angela.D rests on their motivation and their housing situation. The inhabitants have been at the initiative of the project or joining the project based on **a deep believe in the birth and end-of-life facilities**. In addition, each household entered the project as a choice and **in no instance due to a precarious housing need** (including the three social tenants within Pass-ages). During their selection procedure, the inhabitants expressed their share of values and imposed themselves to offer voluntary work to the project. 5hours a week was collectively defined as the minimum necessary for the running of the care facilities and the co-housing as a whole. It is therefore a **collective engagement applied equally to any inhabitants** of Pass-ages that was decided. Each inhabitant committed itself to offer a minimum amount of time regardless his or her situation (such as age, with young children), based on the idea that everyone has something to offer. Each one will ensure part of her/his duty when it suits her/him, and another part collectively. For example, every two Monday evenings a formal meeting is organised where every inhabitant is expected.

Apart from the care facilities, Pass-ages engages in another form of care, through **financial solidarity**. The wealthier households financially compensated the less wealthy households (including social and not social tenants) in investing in the cooperative which bought the ten apartments. They also entered in a non-speculative housing project, meaning they will not receive a large added value when selling the project. Although another sort of financial solidarity was also applied to the CLTB owners, while Pass-ages defined it by itself.

The inhabitants of Pass-ages are aware of their **atypical engagement** and in theory do not expect the same from the other inhabitants of CALICO. Nevertheless, this engagement generates **a culture of responsabilisation** within the CALICO project, and the idea that taking up tasks in the cohousing project is a valuable final aim. In general, this idea is shared by the inhabitants of CALICO in general.

It should be noted that not only Pass-ages inhabitants work as volunteers in the end-of-life facility. Also, other inhabitants of CALICO engaged in this facility and the *Delta*. But in these cases, it was a result of an individual decision and was not imposed by the collective or the association they are part of.

To conclude, there are various forms and ways that inhabitants engage in the CALICO project, that are rather complementary to one another. The collaboration of the three associations enabled diverse forms of engagement, it enabled to gather people in one project for the majority inspired by associative societal vision, but also their co-presence allowed to rediscuss and reflect the diverse forms of engagement over time, according to ones' age, moment in life, energy, etc.

### C. Care giving - competences

Care-giving points at the effective work of care and the necessary competencies to achieve it. It makes a distinction between a claim for care (the two first steps) and the competences required to achieve proper care. In CALICO, care-giving builds on three crucial dimensions: the governance structure of CALICO, the spaces and the diversity of profiles of the inhabitants.

#### 1. The governance structure of CALICO

The governance structure of CALICO has been discussed in great detail in the two last reports (Dawance et al., 2022; Smetcoren et al., 2022) and has been summarized in the following figure.

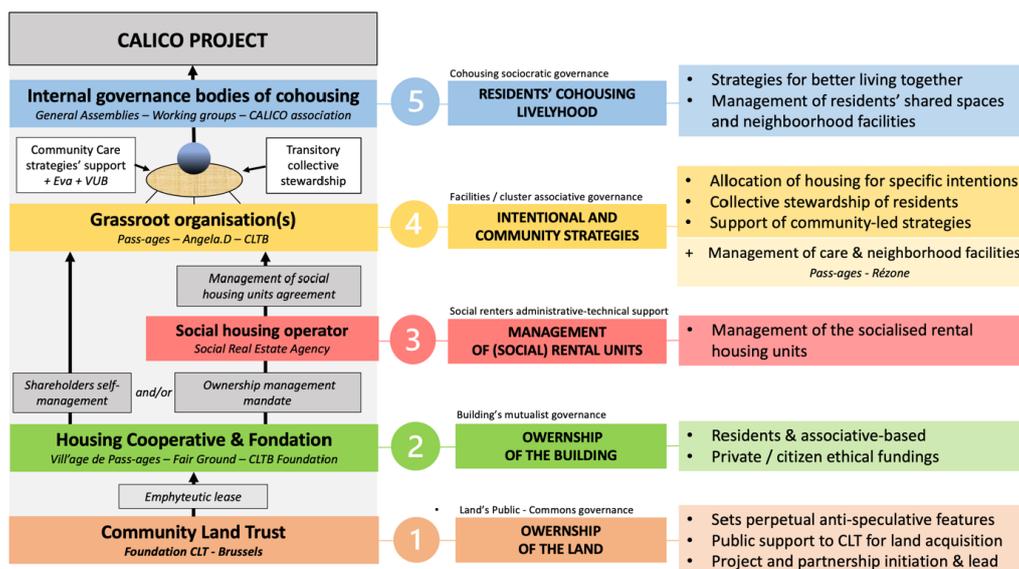


Image 4: Governance model of CALICO see Dawance et al., 2022.

Each layer (and colour) represents a level of competences of decision making and the governing bodies attached to it (for example, resulting in a multitude of different General Assemblies). For each layer attention was given to the potential participation or representation of the inhabitants. But the internal management of CALICO (blue colour in image 4) defined by the CALICO General Assembly and its working groups represent the only level gathering all inhabitants of CALICO. So far, all households have participated in a majority of General Assemblies (unless prevented by circumstances) and have enrolled in working groups.

#### The governance supported by the fieldwork professionals<sup>3</sup>

CALICO could count on a number of fieldwork professionals in order to support the governance system and the daily management of CALICO. During the first year of inhabitation, the 34 households were supported by **one full time equivalent**. In addition, both CLTB and Angela.D were able to obtain a subsidy for appointing two part time equivalents. In parallel, the two women residents from Diogènes (who were formerly homeless) are each supported

<sup>3</sup> "Fieldwork professional" refers to the idea of the professionals involved on the field. It distinguishes from the others professionals working in the associations that are not on a regular basis involved and in contact with inhabitants.

by social workers, not limited in time. This professional support **appeared to be substantial** in order to launch the collective dynamic and ensure a good operation of the governance system.

One of the responsibilities of the involved professionals is to **at least inform all inhabitants about the governance structure**. The different models of governance (for example, based on consensus of all or on consent) imposes to inhabitants to have a deep understanding of the structure in order to actually be part of it. In addition, **inhabitants have been participating or have been in contact with the closest decision bodies**: the CALICO General Assembly (blue), the associations (yellow), the Social Real Estate Agency (red) for inhabitants of Angela.D or the cooperative Vill'ages (green) for the inhabitants of Pass-ages (see image 4). Often, they mobilized one stakeholder about dimensions that does not concern it, or do not know who to contact. For instance, the Social Real Estate Agency was called by social tenants about the breakdown of the elevator, as it was responsible for their renting contract or for the installation of curtains, while other would say that the co-ownership manager is responsible. Also, the professionals who are part of the governance model do not always master this complex structure. For example, the project manager of Angela.D as a brand-new association had to learn how to get along with the multi-layered governance while integrating a gender mainstreaming perspective. This maybe explains their low participation in some Assemblies. While it also left space for the women to take on a more structural role in certain decisions. Informing about the governance structure therefore represents a challenge as the inhabitants and the professionals themselves have different expertise in understanding it and the different obligations it entails.

Another responsibility of professionals was to train inhabitants in the organisation and animation of such governance system. During this first year, they were in charge of the organisation of the General Assembly, of supporting the working groups, of supporting the collective dynamic in the project, and of following individual issues and/or extending them to more collective concerns. They were driven by the very clear objective of **the autonomy of the group**. The groups should learn to autonomously manage and maintain the building (including the collective spaces), to understand the governance and ownership structures, to contribute to social cohesion, to try to connect with the neighbourhood and to support a caring environment. As these objectives are unmeasurable, the professionals often estimate the autonomy of the inhabitants at their capacity to organise collective moments or activities.

The professionals also support **working groups**<sup>4</sup> in order to practically divide responsibilities among inhabitants (as illustrated in image 5). These groups appear to be interesting places of negotiation and discussion about concerns related to the project. Within the working group "Kids" the issue of providing **childcare** during General Assemblies so that all adults could participate became a main concern. First it was accepted by all members that childcare should not only be a matter of concern for parents, but rather a collective one. Then, the group discussed possible solutions and three options were raised: 1) to pay a teenager inhabitant to babysit the children during the General Assemblies; 2) to consider babysitting as part of a larger service exchange of CALICO and so to not pay but still ask a teenager inhabitant; 3) to organise a rotating babysit system among the adults. The first option raised the question who would pay for the service: the parents using the service or the entire group. In the case of the latter, each family could pay 1 or 2€ during each General Assembly. The second option wasn't obvious either as it could overburden teenagers coming from vulnerable families. The third option was difficult for non-parent or single parent as they did not want to miss any General Assemblies. During the last General Assembly, the first option was chosen. However, it was not yet agreed that this option would be maintained permanently.

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<sup>4</sup> From May to October 2022 four working groups (WG) were organized: 1) WG Kids, 2) WG Communal space, 3) WG Charter and 4) WG Rézone. Each working group had approximatively one monthly meeting.



Image 5: The working groups of the CALICO General Assembly schematized by the project manager in April 2022, which has not been updated since then and which will profoundly be modified beginning 2023 (as the group does not have a meaning anymore or the mandates radically changed). (Sources: CLTB)

The professionals also installed **trainings and workshops** to increase the competences of the inhabitants and strengthen a good cohesion in the project. For example, trainings on non-violent communication and conflict management were organized, to give inhabitants tools to deal with tensions in the group or training around active listening in the context of the end-of-life facility, to learn how to listen properly to people's needs. In addition, workshops were organized by Angela.D, initially to reawaken or nourish feminist attitudes, but they became pivotal moments to share profound life experiences, get to know each other better and to strengthen ties.

#### **Governance dynamics at play**

Although the project intends to provide a horizontal governance structure where inhabitants have the opportunity to be involved at different degrees and on different matters, **in practice providing this horizontality is rather complicated**. Even though a large majority understands the complexity of the CALICO set-up (see image 6 an example of how some inhabitants teach to each other the complexity of the model), during the interviews it was indicated that the governance model imposes a responsibility that not all inhabitants are ready to take up. Also many inhabitants indicated to need the support of professionals in order to grasp the full opportunity offered by this model, and knowing which decision body and then which person contact to address.

*"I already had a problem with the boiler, I didn't have hot water for two, three months. But they [the Real Social Estate Agency] were not clear, there was no solution. It is thanks to [the project manager] that someone finally intervene and fixed it. (...) If we have a problem, it is very important to have the CLTB, it can directly call and contact with the social housing agency. Because talking directly with the agency is not easy for inhabitants. There is a great barrier."*  
(R8)



whether these lead to a more convivial dynamic. Also, the activities organised during summer by Angela.D were identified as light, easy, festive activities although they required some organisation. Activities such as the food collection, the feminist activities, the collective yoga class have become central caring activities among inhabitants. For many, the informal moments are becoming increasingly essential.

## 2. The spatial environment as a place for care giving

CALICO is an architectural project and offers a spatial environment which in turn has an influence on the way care-giving is organized. The CALICO project manager often mentioned that the size of CALICO was well balanced to allow a certain critical mass to ensure the rotation of duty yet not too big to organize activities. The quantity of the households within CALICO allowed to meet physically all together, to recognize and to know everyone. The architecture of the project can be identified as adding value to the 'care-giving' dimension. It is an essential component for the project and the inhabitants to enable 'giving care'. Three features of this built environment are crucial: 1) the collective spaces, 2) the division of the building into different parts, and 3) the quality of the individual dwellings.



*Image 6: view from the street as a pedestrian visiting CALICO.*

### **Collective spaces**

The architecture of the project permitted to offer a variety of collective spaces. Some of them were intentionally developed by the project partners as a way to support the collective project among the inhabitants but also towards the larger neighbourhood. While other spaces of the turnkey project, in the outdoor environment, were not purposely created to act as a collective place but offered opportunities.

**Two apartments have been defined as collective spaces for CALICO:** one for CALICO inhabitants exclusively and a second one open to the neighbourhood (Delta). Pass-ages, on its side, owns additional collective spaces for the inhabitants of Pass-ages and the users of the care facilities. These spaces were intended to support collective and caring dynamics among the inhabitants (and the broader neighbourhood) while also they require to be managed and maintained. To do so, the project faced several challenges: **a challenge to spatially transform apartments, the challenge to pay for such spaces and the challenge to manage them.**

At the time of the study the two collective spaces have not been financially supported by the inhabitants themselves. They were applying for subsidies to potentially support them in the future. As the rent of the two collective spaces put an additional financial charge on the families, they have been discussing how to diversify the payment of the rent or how they could reduce the number of collective spaces. Although residents are in favour of such spaces, they suggested that only one space would be sufficient.

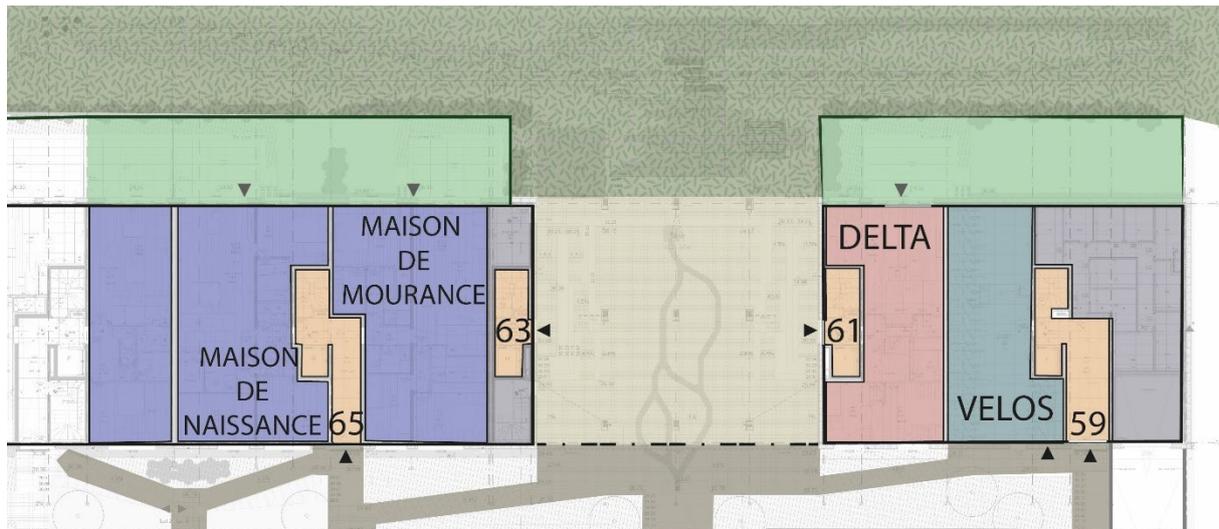


Image 7: Figure ground of the CALICO cohousing project  
 (Circulation space in orange, birth and end-of-life facility in blue, Delta in red)

The collective space **Delta** is open to the neighbourhood and is located in one of the three ground floor apartments. Before moving in, some committees were responsible for devising its program and different ideas were raised on what and how the space could be occupied. During their search, the association of Rézone was mentioned as a possible solution. Rézone is a network within the mental health services of Brussels that was looking for a space to settle their project “place of links” (original title in French: *Lieu de liens*). They offered the opportunity to externalize the management of the space, while developing activities in line with the care dynamic within CALICO. The concept of “place of links” was intentionally left open to co-create the program of the space with the inhabitants. Rézone sees the space as a place that works low-threshold and welcomes people suffering from mental health problems but not restricted to them. They have an open agenda and the activities are managed/supported by a professional (part of the network) and a volunteer. Anyone is free to propose a workshop or an activity. As agreed between the inhabitants and Rézone, in the evening and the weekend, inhabitants can use the space to organize activities.

Although some would have liked to see other types of activities in the space, the majority of the inhabitants sees Rézone as a meaningful project within CALICO. As the target groups of Rézone are vulnerable people with social and mental health problems, a high level of precariousness, addictions, some inhabitants were worried about the people they would encounter. To respond to concerns, time was taken during project start-up to refine the concept and discuss procedures for complex situations.

For many inhabitants, **Rézone supports CALICO** and alleviates the collective caring intention by organizing convivial activities. Others see the place as an occasion to engage in the co-housing project by volunteering in activities (e.g. knitting, sewing, talking groups, DIY workshops, etc.). While most inhabitants do not mind offering their time and competences for free, others feel their professional work is devaluated if offered voluntarily. Nevertheless, after more than one year of occupation the space is regularly occupied by activities that steer a collective and mixed dynamic among the inhabitants.

Next to the activities of Rézone, also General Assemblies and other CALICO collective events (yoga sessions or kitchen workshop) are taking place in Delta. Unfortunately, the place is limited in size and the acoustics are not well suited to host many people. Furthermore, the place can also be used by the individual households, for family parties, birthdays or other events. As such, most inhabitants clearly see the advantage of the place.



*Image 8: Dinner after the kitchen project at Delta (source: CLTB)*

Most part of **the management of Delta** is organized by Rézone but in close collaboration with the inhabitants. Rézone pays for the energy, the heating and Wi-Fi costs. The cleaning duty is assumed by any user after occupation (either during Rézone or during any other occupation). As a punctual agreement, inhabitants manage the garden attached to the Delta and take care of the garbage during weekend. This organisation allows but also imposes CALICO inhabitants to maintain their responsibility towards Delta.

The second collective space, **the CALICO apartment**, is located on the first floor of the building occupied by Angela.D. It is a two-bedroom apartment, with one bedroom that serves as a guest room, that is frequently used. The other room, the living room and kitchen are collective spaces. A working group was dedicated to define the rules and the costs. **Given the location within the bigger building, it was** mostly Angela D. that used the space. Not only is the space less accessible to other residents, they have only recently obtained the key to enter. According to the residents the collective space doesn't offer different spatial quality than their private apartment. Recently several activities took place, such as the food collection, the weekly children activity, etc. which gave inhabitants more occasions to visit the collective space. Yet, they do not fully eliminate the question regarding the costs as these activities could probably find a place in Delta as well.



Image 9: Photo montage taken from the commercialization of the building from the building promotor (<https://www.lessources-brussels.be/fr>)

Next to the indoor collective spaces, there are two outdoor spaces accessible to all inhabitants: a covered courtyard and a park. In addition, the garden of the Delta could be considered as a collective space although its accessibility is linked to the Delta occupation. **The covered courtyard** supports everyday encounters. It is seen as central and cohesive space regardless its bad acoustics. It has been used to organize parties, meetings, moments of conviviality, activities by Rézone and a neighbourhood party. The space is fenced and is semi-public, but it's not yet clear whether the space will attract a larger public once the park will be opened.



Image 10: 1. Picture from the Rézone Facebook page, of a meeting under the covered courtyard.  
2. View from the courtyard on the fence and the street

The **park** is a central subject of discussion in CALICO. Many people mentioned it as a main expectation they had since they moved in CALICO. To live next to a semiprivate green area would answer to their wish to send their kids to play and to meet other inhabitants. During the time of the research in 2022, the park, owned by the municipality of Forest, was under construction and thus unofficially accessible, creating a lot of frustration. Nevertheless, the parc remains an important feature, as inhabitants saw it as one of the few elements of the urban design of the building

on which they would have a hold, such as suggesting indigenous plants and organisation of its management. The park would offer an external place to meet, to exchange with each other, while it would also improve the living quality essential for many inhabitants.

### **One building divided in 4 parts**

The project is strongly marked by the spatial division of the block in 4 parts, each accessible by one **staircase and each marked by a different house number** (numbers 65, 63, 61, 59). These four parts more or less coincide with each housing cluster (see Image 11). The inhabitants are clearly aware of this division and refer to it as such: “at Pass-ages”, “at Angela.D”, “at the 61” or “at the 59”.

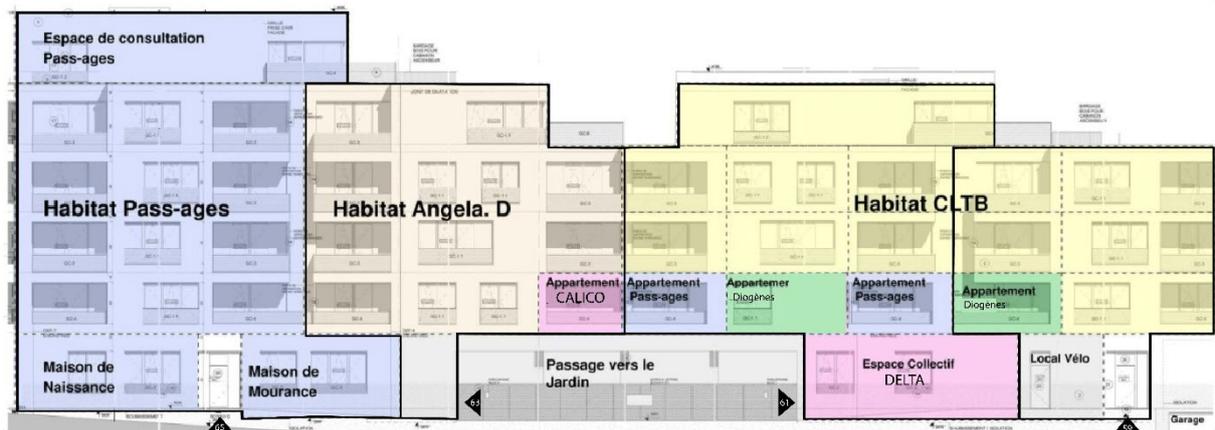


Image 11: Façade with the four staircases and entrances (4 black arrows) and the CALICO collective spaces in pink. (Source: CLTB)

Three staircases give access to several collective spaces, which participate in the dynamic among the neighbour living in these staircases. The collective penthouse of Pass-ages is strongly supporting the Pass-ages group dynamic. The space is seen as a potential space for collectivizing certain tasks, such as a tumble dryer. Also the inhabitants of the Angela.D cluster and the ones of number 61, in vicinity of the CALICO apartment and Delta respectively, **have a sense of ownership of these collective spaces** shared by all the inhabitants. Some of these inhabitants have become a kind informal concierge of the spaces. Also the access of their staircase to the collective spaces imposes them to manage the entrance and circulation spaces for a larger public. At the same time, it offers them the possibility to use the spaces more frequently than the others. In addition, their entrances (59 and 61) are accessible below the covered courtyard, which gives the feeling to be at the centre of the project and increases the encounters between the inhabitants of both parts. In that sense, the inhabitants of number 59 are disadvantaged as their part does not give access to a collective space.

The group dynamic is affected by the division of the building in 4 parts. The fact that **inhabitants of Pass-ages and Angela.D live along the same staircase reinforce their group dynamic**. These staircases are described as places with intense links between inhabitants. Inhabitants of Pass-ages, often leave their entrance door and fire doors open, to facilitate encounters and the circulation of the kids. Also, in number 61, the dynamic created by the staircases is expressed in positive terms. The inhabitants expressed a certain affinity among them (related to their gender, age and interest), even though they are linked to different associations. They also express a common attention to specifically take care of a young single mother also inhabiting the staircase which strengthen the neighbour relationship. At the opposite, the presence of a former homeless at the number 59 is seen as a very difficult element by the direct neighbours.



Image 12: Entrance of Pass-ages facilities and co-housing and system to hold door to facilitate the circulation in the staircase.

**The size of the apartments** and resulting family sizes also participate in this division. Although some inhabitants of number 59 are very well-known or included in collective activities, they are perceived as less present and visible within the general project. There are several reasons for this: the location is separate from the others, they have a separate stairwell, some residents participate less due to health situation, most of the immigrant families of CALICO lives there, all reasons making spontaneous encounters less frequent

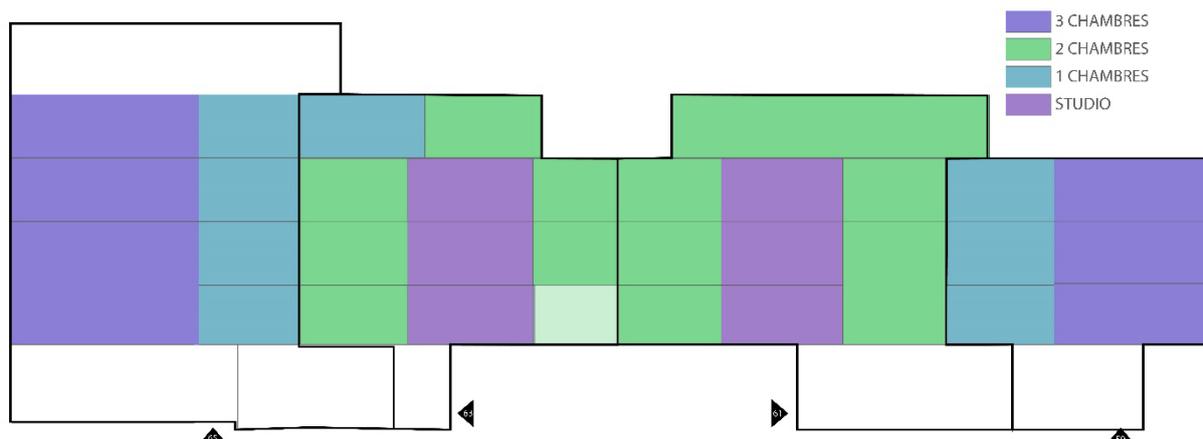


Image 13: Scheme of the façade with the size of the apartment structured by staircases

The presence of kids within the staircase has very different influence on the four parts of the building. In the cluster of Pass-ages, the staircase serves four three-bedrooms apartments inhabited by **families with kids** (from 0 to 15 years old). There, the dynamic is very much punctuated by the presence of kids. In the other staircases, although many kids are present and although the co-housing might offer a support in terms of childcare, the dynamic among the kids is more difficult. For instance, even though six inhabitants of Angela.D are single mothers (for the majority with the full custody of their children), few kids have interactions due to their different ages. In number 61, occupied by one single father and five single mothers, the kids have few interactions because of their busy schedule, different ages and different custody organisations.

### Quality of the apartments

In the interviews, in general, inhabitants express their appreciation for **the quality of the apartments**, in terms of sunlight, view, and acoustic and thermic insulation. However, some do question the quality of the execution, the quality and sustainability of the materials, and, in extension, the building as a financial investment. If most inhabitants have improved their housing condition and appreciate their new apartment in comparison to the former one, some wealthier inhabitants expressed their disappointments on the size, the general access and material quality of the

building. The quality of the apartments is evaluated differently according to the households and therefore it plays very differently a role of care-giving: for some the apartments provide the essential needs necessary for its inhabitants to enter caring relation, while for others, it was not essential and therefore does not significantly support their caring intention.

### 3. Composition of profiles of the inhabitants

In addition to the governance and to the space, **the diversity of the profiles**, e.g. different **competences, life trajectories and cultural backgrounds**, constitutes a third element that actually make possible for inhabitants to take care of each other and to take care of the project. This diversity is the result of a careful reflection about the **different intentions of the project, including social, solidarity, intergenerational, multicultural and feminist intentions**. This resulted in a majority of women (80%), 50% inhabitants older than 50 years, 20% people in retirement, 45% mono-parental households (only one single father), 60% households with children and 35% adults born outside Europe.

The collaboration between the different associations resulted in a **socio-economic mix** and in a large diversity of profiles of inhabitants, based on the selection procedure of each. First, the selection of Pass-ages was based on the network of the initiators. This led to a population with higher income levels than the other families (seven households have an income above the social housing threshold).

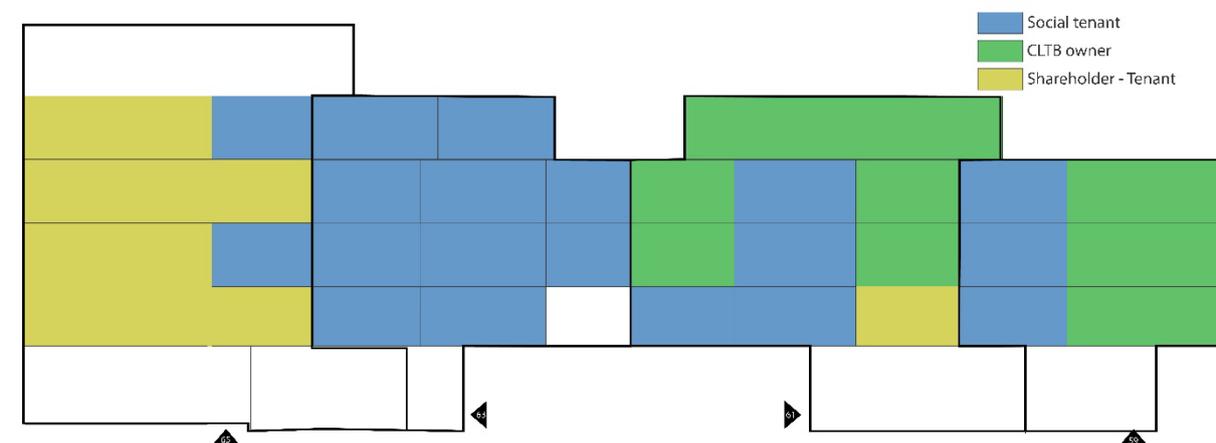


Image 14: Scheme of the façade with the three main economic distinctions: social tenant, owner, shareholder.

Second, the attribution system of CLTB, with the waiting lists, income threshold for social housing, and integration of 4 different income categories, adds to **the social mix**. Further, the collaboration with social rental agencies, entails that people with lower income levels than CLTB owners or with difficulties to obtain a loan, can be part of the project. As such the project is capable of welcoming families with a large gradient of vulnerabilities and financial capacity.

Third, Angela.D was able to bring in a very **heterogenous group**. As it was a new association, it did not reach the classical networks of people in need of housing solutions (for example people that are on waiting list of social real estate agencies or of social housing). Inhabitants entered the project while searching for urgent housing solutions online or by word of mouth. It is assumed that in the future the association would be able to mobilize a comparable group of women based on their vulnerability and their wish to contribute to a feminist project.

According to the CALICO project manager, who has been working for CLTB for a long time, the diversity of profiles in addition to the presence of such engaged inhabitants, many with a clear care objective and some with a strong economic and cultural capital, made it possible to develop the co-housing project of CALICO. In general, the diversity has strongly contributed to the collective dynamic and mutual aid within CALICO.

However, the diversity of ages and household situations is not always easy. It makes it sometimes difficult to **find moments to meet** to collectively concretize the project. Especially single mothers, young parents juggling with the schedule of their kids and care workers working outside office hours have difficulties finding proper moments to meet. Contradictory enough, some inhabitants have organized (or expressed the wish to do so) their life to be able

to dedicate time to taking care of others. Some experience social benefits or part-time work as a support to achieve their engagement in the project or beyond.

Although the project build on a diversity of competences, **the proportion of inhabitants professionally working in the care sector** represents a common thread. Half of the adults living in CALICO works in the hospital, in retirement homes, in health care, as nurses, as nursing assistants, as a teacher or as cleaners. In addition to those professional trajectories, we observed a large interest among inhabitants in body care practices (two yoga professors, two people that practice Do-in for a very long-time, people doing meditation, Qi-gong and Taishi, and one massage therapist) mainly present in the cluster of Pass-ages and in number 61. Another common thread that adds to the group cohesion, is the **women's life trajectories**. Inhabitants have the feeling they can recognize their situations in others' trajectories or difficulties, which is expressed as a strength of the project. As gender vulnerability was part of the selection criteria, especially the women of Angela.D have similar life stories, but this is definitely not reduced to them.

## **D. Care Receiving – Responsiveness**

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The two following sections – focussing on Care receiving and Caring with- discuss the limits and possibilities to improve the caring housing project. Developing a care ethics is not static, it is a process that needs perpetual rearrangement and reflexivity. *Care receiving* looks at the responsiveness of the person in need. It highlights the importance of listening to the answers or reactions of the person receiving care and the type of mechanisms that are used to listen and to respond to care receivers. It therefore implies a dynamic of assessment.

In CALICO, we observed three mechanisms developed for the inhabitants and associations to listen and to react to the diverse needs of the other inhabitants. Among inhabitants, they express their first necessity to know about everyone in CALICO. Next to that, we noticed that project managers deploying various strategies to better address the needs of the inhabitants. Finally, the interviews demonstrated that inhabitants conscientized and eventually expressed some limits of the project to answer to their needs, although not yet addressed.

### **1. Assessing the project by knowing about everyone**

**Knowing about each other** appeared to be the first minimum element to start a caring relation and to evaluate it. So far, many inhabitants are able to name the adults inhabiting CALICO, but no one knows all the names including the children. All the interviewees were conscious of that situation and expect to change it soon.

*« Little by little, I think we are creating affinities with some persons. I think it is normal that we do not know everyone yet. There are people less present also, who we know less, it is difficult to know everyone. But I feel that indeed we will need a little bit more time. One year is very little and it is only now with the organisation of the Wednesday and Thursday moments I think that it could work.... It will help to strengthen ties. » (R3)*

**The collective spaces and meetings** clearly appeared as essential to **increasing knowledge on each other**. During the period of the research, the most important place of encounter appeared to be the circulation spaces (elevator, corridors, stairs) and the sidewalk, rather than the Delta and the care facilities. Subsequently, the diverse meetings related to the internal management are typical moments where the group is deeply encouraged to meet. So far, the CALICO General Assemblies are too large for certain persons to speak up, but the working group meetings or the meetings related to the staircase cleaning are complementary moments that make it easier for certain persons to share they thoughts. These smaller groups are also moments to deconstruct individual interpretations.

During the interviews several cases were discussed demonstrating that when people have difficulties in expressing themselves or even not do it at all, other inhabitants tried to compensate for that. For example one inhabitant explained how she **developed a strategy** to reach out to her neighbour who almost never attended general meetings. By accumulating little information on her (such as age, daily activities), she would use any pretext to knock on her door and to develop, little by little, a relationship with her.

*“We try to look after the persons who are maybe afraid to speak up. We try to tell them when we see them, we try to talk to them explaining them that there is no problem in saying what*

they think. We try to see if it is because they are afraid or rather because they don't have time." (R12)

"For example, she has a lot of children that stay at home the entire day. So from time to time, when I go to the park with my other neighbour, we proposed to take the children with us. You see? It is this kind of attention, and through that little gestion we hope she knows that we are here and that she can count on us. It is like this although it seems insignificant." (R6)

The capacity to listen and respond to others strongly relies on the responsibility of each one, to be attentive to each other. **Benevolence and empathy** (at the centre of the CALICO Care charter) are central to be able to understand the relationship taking place.

## 2. Professionals listening and reorganising projects

One **fieldwork professional** has been able to be responsive to the reactions of **care receivers** (the inhabitants) and **adapt activities in order to actually answer to it**. In the context of the Kids working group, difficulties were encountered to organize collective childcare moments in order to alleviate single mothers (and parents). In response, the project manager decided to first meet, one by one, and listen to several inhabitants in need of such childcare and others interested to volunteer. Afterwards afterschool moments with these inhabitants were organised. However, differently than the organisation of the babysitting during General Assemblies, the volunteering teenagers were paid by CLTB. In this case, thanks to the time allocated by the professional to carefully listen to inhabitants in need and thanks to a limited financial support, the project could be adapted. It raises questions about the autonomy (in this case thanks to a financial support) and competences necessary to achieve such projects.

In the same vein, the workload of the food collection was becoming heavier. Nobody knew how to adjust an activity that, on one side, was helping many inhabitants, but, on the other, was supported by few volunteers. According to the initiators, the tasks associated to the food collection could not be distributed equally to every inhabitant (some being too old to carry or without a car to collect, some too busy to go, etc.), but had to beneficiate everyone regardless their implication. In reaction, the professional organised a kitchen project with the principle to prepare and to cook the food collection with a group of inhabitants and to invite all the inhabitants for dinner. The kitchen project could count on inhabitants that were not yet involved in the food collection. Thanks to the support of the professional, the tasks of the kitchen and food collection were not redistributed equally but shared with other inhabitants.

According to the CALICO project manager, such adjustments to certain projects in order to comply with the needs of care receivers could eventually be done by the inhabitants, but it would have taken much more time, risking to fatigue caregivers. As an example, some inhabitants already took the responsibility to engage a dialog and mediation between neighbours' tension, concerning cleaning duty, garbage management and smell of marijuana.

## 3. Inhabitants, as care receivers, conscious about the limits of the project

Some inhabitants (as care givers and care receivers) are aware of the limits of the housing project to address their needs. Yet, few find a way, a place or a person to express them and to eventually be offered a response to it. Several tensions were described during the interviews.

Several inhabitants expressed **the tension between the collective aims of the CALICO project**, as written and integrated in the general charter and rediscussed during several general meetings, **and their individual aims and needs**. The tensions were expressed as a sense of high responsibility or as a sense of guilt that inhabitants would feel, even sometimes experiencing a pressure from the collective group. During interviews, inhabitants express how much they are free to engage in the project, while they also highlighting the need to maintain individual/free spaces and learn how to put their boundaries.

*"After one year I realized that I couldn't put all my energy everywhere, and CALICO... at the beginning... I wanted to be more present, but I realized through time... also I was in a period of my life where... I had health issues... it was difficult this year for me. (...) I would have like to be more involved, so sometimes I have taken initiatives to organize things. But I also see that my energy... I feel that I need to spare myself. I need to organize my priorities and that is not*

easy to do. This is why now I say that it is a lot of commitments and I think that, indeed, everyone should feel his/her proper investment, to give what he/she is able to offer. But that is not easy to find a balance and I think feeling guilty, at the beginning, is also a natural feeling. And maybe even more for us... I feel that as tenants we even experience this stress more as if we would be indebted for [the cohousing project]." (R1)

Then, the potential **duration of residency** of some families was expressed as another concern. On one side, older people mentioned the security of residency CALICO offers, in comparison to their former private landlord. On the other side, families with young or growing children (also the well-off) pointed at the changing needs due to new-born or growing children. Over the life course of the households (mostly due to divorce or baby born), specific needs are bound to change. The feeling is even more present for single mothers of several children who are social tenants. They know that, legally they will not be able to stay in their apartment much longer due to their household composition and in turn, not stay in the project. This illustrates the tension between the capacity of CALICO to solve urgent housing needs and to be a sustainable project in the long run.

"We have been changing a bit the arrangement of the apartment. But we see that it will not be possible, I will have to look for something else [for another apartment, somewhere else]. You see, it is not possible with these two [kids]. They need their own place, so now I sleep in the living room." (extract of a discussion with a mother, 09-06-2022)

Third, inhabitants expressed their concern related to the intertwinement of their **professional activities and the ones related to their place of living**. In Pass-ages, half of the inhabitants are professionals in birth or palliative care services and from the ones interviewed, they did want to be considered as professional in their voluntary engagement. Differently than the craftsperson who did not agree to volunteer in Delta, these inhabitants of Pass-ages wanted to involve themselves in Pass-ages and in CALICO as a non-professional relationship (being volunteering or not) and rather as a human relationship. On the other side, other inhabitants expressed the expectation to maybe find, directly or indirectly, job opportunities when moving in the CALICO project.

In Angela.D and CLTB, some inhabitants expressed the discomfort of **being reduced to vulnerable, precarious, and "social" housing inhabitants**, as they do not identify themselves as precarious. In the case of Pass-ages, where the identification of the three social tenants is not as clear as for the ones of Angela.D and CLTB, a social tenant defended herself of not being that "social" as she pays a rent "not that much lower than the similar apartment not social". In the case of CLTB, this feeling was not that strong as all inhabitants (owners and renters) had experienced the process of waiting for social housing.

[talking about the technician] "I think that ok, they are probably overwhelmed, that they probably make priority. I was thinking that probably the less wealthy [the social tenants] are not their priority. Here the elevator's breakdown... It takes weeks to be fixed. I think that probably somewhere else it would have been different." (R2)

Also, some wealthier inhabitants expressed a certain discomfort with living in a social project. They gave sense of certain reactions from promoters or building technician and of certain material used in the building as related to the fact that the housing project could be associated as social housing project.

"The elevators often do not work, the bell neither,... it is regrettable in the sense that it is clear that the real estate developer did not invest in good quality. They knew it was social housing and they saved money each time they could." (R11)

In addition, negative feelings were reinforced by the communication and publicity of the project in the region. The innovative aspects of the project, funded by public investments, imposed the inhabitants a frequent exposure of their life, where they were often filmed or photographed.

"It is super intrusive. Because "we got European subsidies", then they can request videos and pictures. They come and say, "you speak well, let's do an online video to say that you have got some funding because you are poor". No, I'm very uncomfortable with that!" (R6)

While some inhabitants clearly expressed their limits within the project, others did not express any. It is crucial for the project to think how such unknown or unexpressed limits can be revealed (making sure that anyone have can

think about the project and can find a place and a way to express it), and as such, to understand the boundaries of care within a cohousing project.

## **E. Caring with – Trust and Solidarity**

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As a concluding step, the last element “caring with” proposes to zoom out and to encompass the entire care process. It imposes to reflect on the multiple and entire care relationships. In CALICO, four caring relationships were identified. For each of them, we point at the tensions observed and that offer a base to re-enter the reflexive circle of the care process. Such an iterative reflexive circle provides the way for more egalitarian and trusting relations.

The first outcome of the everyday analysis allowed to identify the care relations that composes the project: 1) inhabitants- associations; 2) inhabitants-inhabitants; 3) inhabitants-space; and 4) inhabitants-non inhabitants. Affirming that these care relationships exist constitutes a first finding. A second finding consists in identifying the limitations within these relations. Specifically, as they are relational concerns, this step aims at looking at the two sides of the caring spectrum, not only questioning who needs care and who offers it but also analysing the exchange taking place between the two elements. Even within a caring relationship, inequalities and power dynamics persist. The aim of this section aims at being conscious of this.

### **1. Inhabitants - Associations**

Although CALICO aims to develop a horizontal and co-creative dynamic, the relationship between the associations and the inhabitants is often based on power relations. The associations are aware of this imposing relation and reflect on their influence on the selection of inhabitants, on the types of engagement and responsibility imposed by the housing project, on the trust the inhabitants gave them, on the co-construction of vision and projects, and on their intention to empower inhabitants.

*“I think that the stress and the guilt comes back sometimes, but at the same time I know that Angela.D is aware of that and want to stop us feeling guilty. But even sometimes it is even among us that we impose that feeling. (...) saying that there are some people that do not come to meetings, do not participate enough. We can sometimes point at someone because they are absent. It is done in a nice way, it is not disrespectfully, but the message is still there... (...) At Pass-ages they decide to put quotas, and I know that this is not at all in our reasoning, that it can sound a bit dictatorial, too much bit at the same time... they got this engagement at the end.” (R1)*

*“There were associations with us to discuss the “care” of the project. But it was a bit strange to me and I was uncomfortable to discuss and manage “the care” intention with persons that are not part of the community [of inhabitants]. The fact that it is often led by associations, and not us as a community... that was a bit imposing.”(R6)*

Inhabitants, regardless of their housing cluster, also expressed their gratitude to the association that made the project possible.

As the associations will not have the financial means to continue their project management once the funding from Europe and Brussels region finished, this relation between the associations and the inhabitants is likely to reduce over time. Only the future will tell how the inhabitants will ensure continuing the caring dynamic, also in view of the continued relations with the social real estate agency or with the agents managing the co-ownership at the scale of the building block.

### **2. Inhabitants - Inhabitants**

The major basis for trust and solidarity within the CALICO project relies on the relationships between the inhabitants. Although in general, they are working towards strong mutual trust and understanding, during the interviews, inhabitants pointed out that some issues could be improved.

A main **distinction between the inhabitants lies in their different affiliation to associations**, but distinctions also exist within these associations. Each affiliation initially resulted from different housing needs (from no specific housing needs, over qualitative and affordable housing needs to urgent needs) and different engagements (specific to CALICO, CLTB, Angela.D and Pass-ages). Initially, participants of the project linked the types of housing needs to the types of engagement. This would entail that the inhabitants the most in need would be the less engaged.

*“The ones that are less engaged, they think that if there is a food collection, and that there is [food], then [they think] “I will beneficiate from it, but if there is no [food collection] never mind!” There are some persons that think like that, but they have not been... they did not sign for a co-housing, they signed for an affordable housing.” (R10)*

However, during the research, we explored how the categorizations were actually transcended little by little. By getting to know each other better, the inhabitants either changed their engagement or their perception, no longer considering the neediest as the less committed.

*“With the CLTB there are some [inhabitants] that have joined the project because it is a social [housing] project, because they could have access to an affordable housing, but who were not for a co-housing project. This was not their first choice. We felt it. During the first meetings, we realised that we did not have the same level of expectancies and wishes. I think this is one of the main challenges of the project: to accept that we didn’t all start with the same expectations, neither the same needs and collective needs. But we feel that there is a certain dynamic, that should be implemented further.” (R11)*

During interviews with CLTB members and other inhabitants, the fact that CLTB did not officially **impose a care intention** was often cited as a weakness of the project, resulting in a lower commitment by CLTB inhabitants. Some CLTB inhabitants would have preferred to have a collective agreement on core principles of a minimum engagement. Hereupon, a discussion was launched to see how each could be more involved, as this caught their interest over the course of the project. During this discussion, it was mentioned that certain persons were already engaged in other projects outside CALICO, or that the project was in a first instance a housing project. This **reminded about the need to recognize the inequalities** between inhabitants and to accept its impact on the investment of each. Such search for reciprocity is sometimes at odds with the intention of care and the inequalities that are associated with care.

*“I don’t agree to start counting what we have been doing in that context. We are here with a social goal. I don’t like this notion of calculation. We don’t have the same life! In six months, I might not be able anymore (to invest that much time)... Everyone should feel comfortable (with his/her engagement). For the moment, it (my engagement) is enough for me! “ (Extract of discussion during a working group, 09/06/2022)*

Nevertheless, individual circumstances do play a role in accepting the fact that some are little or almost not involved in care activities. For instance, coming from a situation of homelessness, having many children, being visibly ill, or being beyond a certain age are the commonly accepted situations for inhabitants.

*“I remember that she arrived here, alone, with her six children... this is where we realized that we have really different life trajectories, where we realized what people have been through... they arrived until here... the strength these people have, to be alone and raising six kids” (R11)*

It is also accepted if one partner of a couple is participating less than the other. But, the recognition of these individual circumstances, has also led to a distinction between the ones deserving help and the ones where this is not so clearly identifiable, leading to expectations and divisions within the group. The following quote illustrated how some persons are pointed out being less participating while the interviewee started acknowledging a potential circumstances.

*“There are some persons, I felt they are less present, they are less participating. They will be there because they are invited to, but they will not bring in something. But also they might also have so many other stuffs to do... probably due to their life trajectory...” (R10)*

Within the group of Pass-ages such unmet expectations are less (yet) present, as the group started from a clear engagement of each inhabitant in the care facilities, which has enabled to develop strong ties among them. It also pushed them to reflect together on the nature of their care vision. As such they can easily express their perspective while discussing with non-Pass-ages inhabitants. While within the entire group of CALICO, due to this strong engagement, inhabitants of Pass-ages express certain expectations regarding the inhabitants of the other clusters. Therefore, they impose **themselves to be empathic and sympathetic** to contain and reduce their expectations on others.

*“For me, what I’m looking for is spontaneousness, joy,...[within the CALICO cohousing] It is very specific to me. I know it. I’m not a single mother. But I also know that I’m also downgrading my expectation to not exhaust myself and the others.” (an inhabitant from Pass-ages during a working group, 16/06/2022)*

### 3. Inhabitants - Space

The caring relationship is not restricted to human interactions but also includes non-human objects, such as the building. Today the management of the CALICO building is not the main worry of the inhabitants as it was bought brand-new. The care for the building will be more central in the long run, when renovation questions were to arise. In the case of CLTB and Pass-ages inhabitants, who are owners, they know they need to maintain the building and ensure renovations in the future. Yet, this reflection has not yet been enlarged to inhabitants that do not own their unit. On the other way around, the building is already considered by the inhabitants as a caring infrastructure, which has a role to play in the caring relationship. They questioned it to be able to take care of them, to answer to their housing needs. They point at the misconception of the building and address the materiality and spatiality of their dwelling. They question the quality of the elevators, supposed to ensure the intergenerational project, where inhabitants are supposed to age and eventually die.

### 4. Inhabitants versus non-inhabitants

The project initially started from the concrete housing need in the Brussels Capital region. The partners of CALICO were aware of the limit of the project to answer to this housing need in an exhaustive way. Still, some inhabitants expressed a discomfort about the gap between the theoretical needs, commitments and societal vision of the project and their practical translations in the project. Inhabitants (and associations) are pulled in two directions. On one side, they claim to develop an inclusive housing project, attentive to intersectional needs and inequalities. In theory, they aimed to not exclude anyone and to be benevolent and empathic. On the other side, to guaranteeing a certain quality of the housing project and to gather the necessary competences to do so, some people have been excluded from the housing or were not invited to apply for the housing. Practically, so far, the inclusion was ensured though the application of quota, which guarantees a minimum of low-income families, older persons, women and homeless persons.

*“We say that we are open to everyone, but in reality, it is not true” (R13)*

*“I think it is a very excluding project towards the person who are very vulnerable. I don’t have problem to say it. I also might judge someone [in selection procedure, for example], because I’m unsecured. I would have felt uncomfortable. And indeed, there is a work to be done here, because it [the project] should be open to anyone. But at the same time, it is a project that request some engagement, while, at the same time, we are here to be in solidarity and to help each other and at the same time, for me, that is an utopia. I think we all have our limits and I think it is important to respect each one limits. Because, from my experience, I can tell you that I have been living with someone suffering from psychosis and from that moment, I can tell you that I’m not able to life with someone like that. It is impossible, it is even dangerous for me. (...) Anyway precariousness does not mean that we are all mentally sick, this is not what I mean. But I think that we should be clear on our limits.” (R1)*

Some inhabitants feel guilty to be part of a project could be considered exclusive, while at the same time, they do not see how to be more inclusive. Seen from the perspective of the ethics of care, this awareness is already a good starting point in the care circle.

## VI. Conclusion

This report described the organization, the daily life and the issues that were encountered during the first year of habitation. Considering the past reports on the intense trajectory of setting up CALICO and devising the financial, administrative and legal structures (Dawance et al., 2019, 2022; Smetcoren et al., 2020, 2022), this report was essentially based on the experiences of the inhabitants, their discourses and their daily life together in the cohousing project. The ethics of care (Tronto, 1994) offered the framework to do this. It enabled to discuss how the project goes beyond the right to housing and to discuss how its care intentions originated, have been devised, and integrated in the everyday cohabitation in the project. Therefore, the framework did not only tackle the care intentions in the strict sense linked to health services but embraced a broader definition and process of care. Following the definition of Tronto, Care is everywhere and is “*everything we do to maintain, continue, and repair our world so that we can live in it as well as possible*” (Fisher & Tronto 1990, p. 40). Reflected at the scale of the society, the ethics of care could support a more democratic society.

This conclusion summarizes the five steps described throughout the report. It also points at the questions raised in view of a replication of specific dimensions of the CALICO project within the Brussels housing policy context. The first three steps of the ethics of care - *Caring About, Taking care of and Care-giving* - discussed the elementary components for the reproduction of the caring project. The two last steps - *Care-receiving and Caring with* - highlighted the difficulties and limits that could be addressed in future projects. By structuring the results within the steps of ethics of care we answered these research questions. Evidently, these elements are the results of seven months of fieldwork in a preliminary stage of the project, and are thus not fixed, but should be seen as starting points for a more caring housing policy. In addition, it would also be interesting to re-run the research on residents' experiences and perceptions around living and care within CALICO within a few years, focusing again on the different steps of Ethics of care.

**Step 1 – Caring about** by identifying the housing needs and the intersectional needs related to housing.

- The identification of people's needs in a problematic housing situation, to build the CALICO project, was done by associations, who relied on their expertise within the housing field. They did not only understand the Brussels housing context, but also grasped the complexity and multidimensionality of people in need of appropriate housing.
- In addition to this expertise of the associations, at the level of the region, it appeared necessary to organize this expertise in a more structural way. So far, the existing statistics and monitoring do not offer a clear view on the specific intersecting housing needs of the Brussels' population. Nor does a thorough analysis of those on the waiting list for social housing exist so far.
- In CALICO, specific needs (anti-speculative housing, hosting a place where birth and end-of-life could happen in a familiar environment, gender equality, intergenerational living, care, addressing the neighbourhood) and target groups (ageing people, women, migrants, low-income families) were prioritized by the different associations involved in the project. The involvement of three different associations that each had expertise on specific topics, contributed to build such a diverse project.
- At the level of inhabitants, everyone agreed on the necessity to develop a caring environment within the project. They all expressed the intention to contribute to it, although they envisage different forms of caring about.

**Step 2 – Taking care of** by expressing engagement and responsibility

- The aim to tackle care needs were concretized by setting quotas and by developing a societal vision. First, the three sub-groups and CALICO applied quotas to select the households that would inhabit the project. It appeared to be a very tangible way to answer to housing needs. Nevertheless, some needs could not be translated into quotas. Also in future projects, it would be useful to reflect on quotas that address specific care needs. Yet, to make this happen in the short but also in the long run, evaluation bodies should be associated with the project. Second, the anti-speculative, feminist and birth- and end of life care visions were developed by the associations involved in CALICO. In future projects, having similar or different societal vision that answers to specific needs, would already be a good step.
- By naming and expressing “CALICO, Care and living in community”, the project announces a caring intention. By naming the project as such, the project expresses a minimum caring obligation that all stakeholders of the project have towards each other, when entering the project. At the level of the region, care could be recognized as a crucial dimension of housing and could be translated in a legal appellation as such as the “habitat solidaire” was defined in the housing code.

- The caring commitment of inhabitants towards each other and toward the project was firstly settled through the housing allocation procedure. Then, CALICO tried to concretize the care vision within CALICO together with inhabitants, for instance by setting up a care committee, writing a charter or defined the organisation of the building management. Such project and care vision should be based on co-construction and trust and cannot be strictly imposed.
- Three types of engagement were assumed by the three sub-groups, going from naming a care intention, to sharing a societal vision to imposing volunteering time. These three forms are intertwined with the individual capacity of the inhabitants. In case of Pass-ages for instance, this entails a very strong and atypical commitment. It would not be evident to count on similar forms of engagement in future projects. Therefore, a rebalance of the three following care giving elements (the governance model, the space and the composition of profiles) are required to compensate.

**Step 3 – Care giving:** the following components enable to take care of others: the governance of the project, the space and the composition of profiles of the inhabitants.

- Concerning the governance of the project:
  - o The convivial moments were essential to enjoy the project, to better know about each other and to pursue caring commitments.
  - o The instant communication system was used for everyday communication between inhabitants.
  - o The appointment of professionals was crucial to guide the group and pursue their autonomy in the future.
  - o It was first important to provide the necessary information on the governance structure in order to enable inhabitants to understand and appropriate it. The importance of this information was proportional to the complexity of the governance structure and required time and expertise.
  - o The CALICO working groups were moments where opposing visions and values could be discussed in depth.
  - o CLTB has built a lot of expertise in providing trainings and workshops. The organisations of Angela.D and Pass-ages added to this and devised new types of workshops, according to specific challenges in the project, such as workshops on active listening, domestic violence, collective intelligence and conflict management.
- Concerning the space:
  - o The fact that the building was bought turn-key, was decisive for the use of it.
  - o Compared to other alternative housing projects in Brussels, CALICO is relatively large in terms of size. Due to the fact that the CALICO group is composed of 34 families, divided into three sub-groups of approximately 10 households, CALICO could benefit from two scale levels defined by the building. It added to developing stronger ties among smaller sub-groups (divided in the four parts of the building). And it added to developing larger projects such as the food collection by offering collective spaces and by dwelling a substantial number of volunteers/beneficiaries.
  - o However, the subdivision of the building reinforced the subgroups, and as such, created ambivalences to building collectiveness at the scale of the entire housing project.
  - o It provided indoor collective spaces that arose spatial, financial and management challenges. Building a collective project entails sharing at least one collective space. The multiplicity of collective spaces and facilities in the building offers a high potential but has not been intensively tested yet. The additional outdoor collective spaces such as the covered courtyard, garden and park; and the interstitial spaces, such as the sidewalk, staircases and elevators proved to be essential in supporting the project.
  - o For the majority of the inhabitants, the architectural quality offered a better living condition, essential to pursue the collective project.
- Concerning the composition of profiles of the inhabitants:
  - o Thanks to the collaboration of three associations with different networks, publicity and visions, the project could be supported by a large diversity of individuals.
  - o It offered a socio-economic mix among inhabitants but also a large diversity of competences (professional and expertise), of life trajectories and of cultural backgrounds.
  - o Beside the heterogenous composition, the project could count on the large share of inhabitants working in care sector or sensitive to it and on the feeling of the inhabitants to share similar values.
- The governance of the project, the space and the composition of the inhabitants are complementary and could be adapted according to the future project. The governance and the space are directly related to

the time and means invested in the project, while the composition of the inhabitants is ensured by the household selection procedure. Two third of the inhabitants were not selected based on selection criteria similar to social housing. In that case, a reflection on how the housing public subsidy should be allocated is necessary.

- In case of Angela.D, the selection procedure built on the recognition of vulnerability criteria (answering to the criteria to access social housing in addition to have experienced a certain precariousness due to her gender) in addition to the adherence to a feminist vision.
- Pass-ages raises the question whether in other housing projects, other inhabitants with financial resources above the threshold of social housing would engage in a similar way in order to achieve a care vision, without obtaining a public subsidy.

**Step 4 – Care receiving:** being able to express the limits of the project and being able to listen (and eventually answer) to these limits.

- Knowing about each other and knowing everyone is the first guarantee to ensure a good listening. Sharing specific spaces and time together added to be attentive and to develop empathy towards each other.
- In order to answer to some limits of the project, some adaptations have been made the last year. The presence of three fieldwork professionals, the first year of inhabiting the project, contributed to make such adaptations.
- Then, many challenges in the first year of the project touched upon the question of unequal investment in the project, the tension between private and collective interests, the distinction between engaging in a project as a volunteer or a professional, and the fact that the appartement could not be adapted. Although everyone was conscious about these challenges, there was a need to express them to reduce potential frustration. General Assemblies and working groups allowed for that, even when not tackling them completely.

**Step 5 – Caring with:** strengthen solidarity and trust by taking care of each type of relationships present in the co-housing project. The last step proposes to enlarge the reflection and to consider the different caring relationships the project created. So far, we enumerated four caring relationships. A future project could start by recognizing all these relationships. Evaluation mechanisms, such as yearly moments, evaluating bodies or continuous or self-evaluation process could help to maintain trust, reciprocity and solidarity.

- Concerning the relationship between inhabitants and associations, it is essential to maintain space for evaluation and exchange between them as the two stakeholders are not evolving with the same concerns, neither the same realities regarding the cohousing project. It imposes the fieldwork professionals of the associations – and the cooperative, the building promotor or Social Real Estate Agency by extension - to be aware of their own position and influence in the housing project and to also reflect about it in terms of power relations and inequalities.
- Concerning the relationships between the inhabitants, the main difficulty of the project lied in its strengths. The inhabitants are on some aspect strengthened and empowered due to the large diversity existing among the inhabitants. At the same time, the large diversity also constitutes a main challenge to strengthen a collective group dynamic and to go beyond sub-group dynamics or cultural divisions.
- Concerning the relationship between inhabitants and the space, it could be improved by seeing the space as a caring infrastructure, by making it more environmentally sustainable or enable the neighbourhood to make use of it.
- And finally, replication should be highly considered by striving to provide everyone with a place to live in a caring environment.

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