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Interim Report

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1_The starting point



Caring IN the city is a cross-project that combines participatory research and collective artistic production. It is the extended version (designed with the idea of becoming European) of an ongoing project: La Tribu de Arganzuela (The Tribe of Arganzuela), which has been granted with funds from the call *Una ciudad muchos mundos* launched by Intermediae-Matadero (a Madrid City Hall's cultural institution).

In its first phase, Caring IN the city has accompanied the ongoing The Tribe of Arganzuela process of the creation of a learning community that has carried out a research and a creative process. The group began with two questions as a starting point: How are children being brought up in the neighborhood of Arganzuela? How can we improve this situation? What public policies can be developed in this direction?

This group has developed several workshops where we have explored upbringing experiences, families' needs, desires and proposals. We have used several

techniques, from participatory research to debates, walks, artistic production, etc. In this report we describe our findings during this first phase. This first part of the project is also narrated in a radio program that was recorded live in an event we organized in one of the districts squares, plaza de las Peñuelas. Caring IN the city has documented this process with video interviews and storytelling in the project's Tumblr. This way we will be able to disseminate this experience and replicate the process in other contexts.

In its second phase, starting in September 2016, the project will go from local to global. We will visit other related experiments that deal with care-work and parenting in Spain, and will launch research on how care-work and parenting are organized in Europe, comparing two different models: southern countries versus northern countries. The highlight of this phase will be a visit to Finland with the aim of learning from another Idea Maker, Ylva Rancken-Lutz, and her research on first-time parenting in urban and suburban settings in Sweden, Finland and Denmark. With all the information gathered, we will write a final report that will collect our findings and will propose a series of policies and recommendations in order to make care-friendly cities. The report also wants to put in the spot the creative methodology and the cultural activity as a way to engage people in the shaping of political ideas.

Context and hypothesis

Spain has a weak Welfare State that has deteriorated in the past few years due to the crisis. The cuts on social services (day-care centers, education, health services, etc.) have provoked a reproductive crisis, forcing families (and specially women) to take over most of the care-work.

Madrid has undergone a major transformation over the past two decades. Its integration into the global economy in the hands of a real estate boom has led to rapid economic growth, massive urban development, housing construction and major infrastructure development. The Arganzuela neighborhood embodies many of the contradictions and consequences of this transformation process. An old industrial neighborhood that has seen the old industrial spaces transformed into parks and green spaces, cultural and municipal infrastructures, and into residential areas. Arganzuela is the second largest district in Madrid in size and population, an area of the city center in the crossroads of gentrification.

In this context, raising children is a very complicated chore, forced to move between precarious jobs and long hours, scarce public services and a city designed for cars. Many families are faced with two alternatives: the outsourcing of care (mostly to other women) or dedication to them exclusively by one of the parents (again, mostly women).

The care work, essential for sustaining life, it is thus performed in the invisibility and loneliness of households. The feminist movement saw in this isolation a factor

of oppression of women. In successive waves, feminisms have implemented various strategies to get care-work outside the home and do it collectively. There have been many experiences of these strategies, such as the collective kitchens, community laundries and nurseries that feminists involved in utopian socialism proposed; or the nursery schools organized by the feminist movement in Spain during the Franco regime.

However, breeding in common needs cities that are able to accommodate these practices. Feminism, urbanism and critical sociology have shown how city planning is not neutral or innocent, but is organized to facilitate the movement of commodities rather than people.

Is it possible, in this context, to create spaces, narratives and communities to make parenting in common?

2_The process from December to June

Juanita's walk

After few months engaged on mapping resources, groups and associations of the district, the first step of the Tribe was an event on December 12, 2015, El Paseo de Juanita (Juanita's Walk). It consisted of a walk around the neighborhood in the morning, and a workshop and a lecture in the afternoon.



Juanita's Walk, partly following the Jane's Walk methodology, charted an itinerary of various resources and trouble spots in the neighborhood that gave us cause to discuss topical issues concerning our daily as caregivers in different neighborhoods in the district of Arganzuela.

For example, our current reality is living in a neighborhood full of roundabouts and streets with several lanes, designed almost exclusively for cars which forces us as pedestrians to take a lot of micro-paths to avoid these obstacles, which means delays in spaces not so nice for walking (see the two roundabouts Santa María de la Cabeza addressed on the walk). This situation worsens when we are walking with small children

or strollers and also makes it difficult for our smaller neighbors to walk to school.

On the same subject we noticed the high demand for nursery, primary and secondary centers, as most of the existing buildings of this type are old and

overcrowded. People also mentioned the need for informal meeting places and public assembly spaces to accommodate diverse and intergenerational uses.

Thanks to people in the neighborhood involved in preparing the promenade and neighbors who joined spontaneously we were able to meet and share different perspectives related to the living in the district of Arganzuela and living with children.

Members of [El Paseo de Jane](#), [La Revoltosa](#) common city garden, the free nursery El Palomar, [Nación Rotonda](#) collective, [AMPA \(Parent's Association\) CEIP Miguel de Unamuno](#), [EVA Arganzuela](#) Common Space and The Sanchita common city garden took part in the walk.

Workshop



Following the methodology of our fellow grant recipient Las Raras, we tried to create a relaxed atmosphere where the conversation could flow while we had some snacks and the children played around us. There's a great need for spaces where people can share upbringing experiences.

The aim of the workshop-discussion was that, once divided into small groups, we could share experiences in a relaxed way (trying to incorporate the children in the development of the activity) about raising children in the neighborhood. Isolation,

loneliness, inhospitable neighborhoods within the district and, on the other hand, the presence of family networks in upbringing and Madrid Río being, by default, one of the free spaces most used. Some of these indicators were mentioned again and again in different groups.

Each group chose a spokesperson to share where it came from and what ideas had been brought up during the talks.

A talk

The roundtable discussion we shared with Carolina del Olmo, author of the book *Where is my tribe?*, sociologists Ines Campillo and Tomas Cano, and architect Eva Garcia, was on the childcare and upbringing in cities.

The discussion brought up how social organization is deeply hostile to breeding, to the extent that it's seen as a private matter that everyone has to manage as they can. We reflected on how public policies regarding maternity and paternity are insufficient and social services are scarce. The speakers emphasized the need to disconnect parental leave from employment as the linking of social advances to the labor field leaves out those who are unemployed or have precarious jobs.

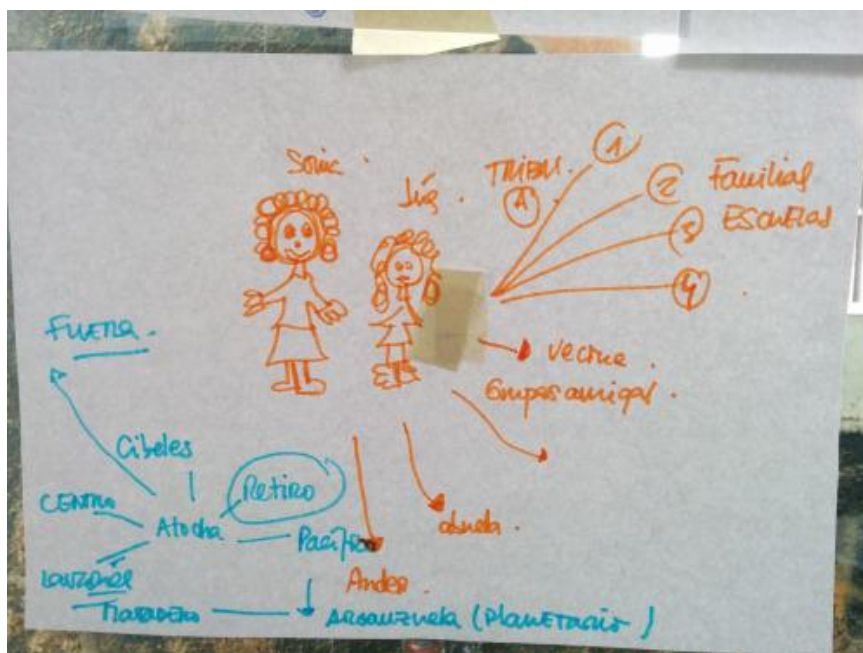
We also discussed what a feminist city would be like and which issues such a city should address to become diverse, accessible and welcoming to all kinds of people, uses and routes. A feminist city should take into account, for example, other routes beyond household employment; the offering of public spaces in which to combine parenting with other activities; that prioritizes walking, biking or public transport in preference to cars; or to make facilities and nearby social services available.

What is my tribe and where to walk?

On Saturday January 23 we had the first session of the Tribe of Arganzuela/Caring IN the city project.

The meeting was in the terrarium at Intermediae / Matadero, a frequent and informal place where families and caregivers like to meet, especially on cold or rainy days. That day there was a very high turnout, with new as well as familiar faces. Most of those concerned were parents of toddlers as well as babies and older children.

We started with the dynamics of knowledge and creativity intending to illustrate what our tribes are like and their place on the map of the different neighborhoods in the district and other Madrid neighborhoods such as Retiro, Usera and Tetuan, from which some participants also came. The aim was to visualize the similarities and intersections between the features of our tribes and our daily routes in Arganzuela. In a district as large as Arganzuela there are many sub-neighborhoods with their own routes.



The participation was quite dynamic, even with the difficulties with concentration and attention in sharing common space of work / play with the little ones. There was an educator there to keep children entertained with stories and craft materials, but the toddlers kept coming and going to their parents between play sessions.

We didn't have time to cover the creative dynamic, where we intended to generate stories from our environment to make our life situations visible. We will take that up in the next session!

After sharing our tribes and paths we assembled to discuss our impressions of the session and ideas for upcoming meetings:

- Make sessions shorter and more frequent. Therefore, everyone was invited to the following session two weeks later.
- Since our work is with children, we have to keep in mind that they're part of the Tribe, we are committed to designing our next sessions with them in mind.
- The very homogeneous profile of the participants. This is a theme to work on and we were concerned about this from the start. We concluded that it is difficult to fully represent the tribe of Arganzuela, as the neighborhood is very diverse. That's why we have to work on meeting with strategic people in the neighborhoods in order to connect us with other neighbors. Anyways, we will be "one" of many tribes. It's nice to see how our footwork makes abstract ideas change!

- We reminded ourselves of the importance of conducting a technical analysis of the needs of the district regarding parenting and childhood. For this, Pandora Mirabilia intends to initiate research with the support of the district board.

What I would like my neighborhood to be like?

At the request of the assembly, this session was intended for the children of the Tribe to take the floor.

We started refreshing some of the findings from the other two sessions. We recalled the two objectives of the project which are, in addition to building a tribe: 1.- doing a radio show/podcast and 2.- writing a report on needs related to parenting, childhood, and neighborhood networks.

Doing things together is always a challenge but it's also the best way to go about building a community.



Manuela Marcos, children's educator of our tribe, proposed building a model of our ideal neighborhood using recycled materials and plastic.

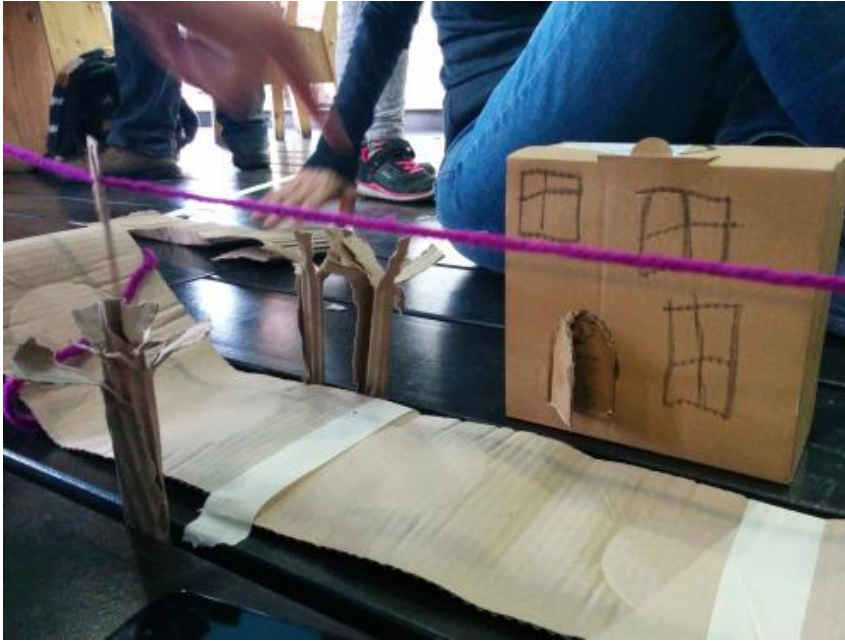
Some ideas were brought up, such as: Interconnected Houses; a zip line project to cross streets; Houses with solar panels; Playhouses for children; Orchards, areas for yoga and barbecue on Madrid Rio. "Because in the district we do not need more buildings,

we need to inhabit the spaces we already have."

The session left us with a good feeling. We had fun, we moved around, we used our imaginations and we laughed. We welcomed new and familiar faces to the gathering that day.

And as we ran out of time for the assembly, we called the next meeting for Saturday March the 5th at 11.30 at the same place with the idea, weather permitting, of playing and working outside.

In closing, we leave you a reflection from a family in the neighborhood who came for the first time: "Although we are aware of all the problems of the neighborhood (pollution, noise), compared to the other districts of the Centre, Arganzuela has very positive things, for example, mobility: we have wide sidewalks that Tetuán and other neighborhoods like Lavapiés don't have, which is vital for us as our twins need a double stroller".



Tribu extends...

Between sessions, the Tribe project / Caring IN the city began to spread:

- We created a mailing list to send information and reports of the sessions, with the aim of also serve as virtual space for communication.
- We had meetings with our "**advisory council**", a group of five people with whom we have shared questions, suggestions, and different visions that have served us to have *feedback* of the project, to connect with other tribes and to adapt and modify the project. This group is composed by Veronica Martinez, who participates in EV Arganzuela and the AMPA CEIP Miguel de Unamuno; Luis Benedicto, educator in Escuela el Palomar; Sonia Campo, sociologist and mother; Sara Martin, who accompanies projects in Intermediae, and Ana Garrido from EV Arganzuela.
- Invited by Veronica Martinez, we went to the assembly of AMPA CEIP Miguel Unamuno to present the project and encourage them to participate. There we met two very interesting projects: *Nivola*, the school's magazine, a publication made by children; and *Orejitas y orejones*, a radio program made by kids with Charo Soria's help.

- Following a suggestion made by Ana Garrido, we began participating in a local group dedicated to making a map of resources and needs of Arganzuela. Subsequently, this group decided to join the participatory budgeting process, in which we also participated.
- We met with the District Councillor, Romy Arce, and her adviser, Toni Garcia, who had keen interest in the project and were very receptive to receiving proposals and suggestions for improving the district to make it more accessible for children. We were offered the possibility of having a municipal space for mothers and fathers to attend with babies from 0 to 3 years, similar to those existing in other districts.
- After this meeting, we launched a questionnaire on parks and playgrounds and decided to devote a session of the Tribe to this issue. The questionnaire was sent through the district's parents associations. In it we asked people to tell us how is their local park is like. By local we mean the one people use more often because it's close to home or school. What elements does it have, what things are missing, what improvements they proposed, etc.?

What my park is like and what I wish it were like?

The third session of the Tribe took place on Saturday March 5th in the Revoltosa garden (Plaza de las Penuelas), echoing the proposal of some mothers and fathers to make outdoor workshops.



The meeting went very well, we believe it was one of the best we have had, although each of them has had its good points. People showed commitment to the group and the project. Also, being in an open space helped us to break the barriers that we have always found at Intermediae, especially the profile of the participants. Passersby who otherwise would never have heard the call came along.

We were grateful for the involvement of Sara Sama from La Revoltosa garden. The space and working with the soil created a very relaxed atmosphere and was much less stressful than other sessions.

Manuela, our educator, was able to work much better thanks to the materials provided. At last we could combine the work of debate and communication between parents with the more playful activity of the children who, moreover, told us what they liked and did not like not about the park.

What do we want our parks to be like?

- We would like them to be integrated into the city and not like small cages or playpens.
- We want shareable parks for the use of everyone (adults, adolescents...) and all kinds of uses (sports, walk, etc.).
- We want green areas integrated into the playground, instead play areas separated by barriers.
- In short, we don't want the parks to be divided into zones for specific uses, but a space for the community. We love to think of parks as living spaces where many things can happen: gardening, meeting with seniors, concerts, etc.
- We went from being able to play in the whole city to playing only in a small space.
- We would like the materials of the parks, instead of cement or plastic, to be recycled.
- We want the playground equipment to be more versatile, allowing different uses. For example, swings for children from 0 to 3 allow them to play independently and not rely on an adult, as they do now.
- We would also like the parks have a shed to store toys, like in Esto es una plaza. So we don't have to bring toys to the park and recycling is encouraged.
- We want the parks to have drinking fountains, like those in Retiro Park (with two taps, one for humans and the other for animals).
- We need public covered spaces for winter or rainy days, now the only alternatives are commercial spaces or Matadero, already overcrowded.
- We would like recover some spaces that are there but are unused or underused.

For example:

- Rutilio Gacís Park, which is great but is very run down.
- An empty lot next to the Matadero greenhouse, which could be used for gardening (now it's used to put the attractions during San Isidro Festival).
- José de Villarreal Park, which is abandoned but very attractive, because it has no cars.
- Several abandoned covered food markets (behind Plaza de Peñuelas), which are great because they have room for kids to run and play.
- An empty lot in Juan Duque street, near La Riviera concert hall, that the neighborhood association is claiming for neighborhood use.

In short, we would like, instead of having a city with parks, a park with city in it.

Proposal on playgrounds for participatory budgets

We decided to submit a proposal for improvement of playgrounds in the district of Arganzuela based on the information gathered at the meeting of the Tribe and through questionnaire. It should be noted that we had to leave out many of the recommendations and suggestions we received out of the proposal to fit in the format and type of expenditure that could be financed for the call. Also, since the proposal was partial, necessarily technical and specific, we could not include more comprehensive or global recommendations that also involve mobility, urban design, the layout of the streets, land use, etc. So, we had to leave out the following general recommendations:

- Clean green areas that allow children to run, as well as shaded areas to be in summer.
- Benches and tables to sit down, eat and rest.
- Secure areas without fences, to promote the autonomy of the children.
- Enable parks to be community spaces for people of different ages (children, adults, the elderly, young people...), with open spaces and different areas for different uses (sandboxes for kids, swings, areas with tables and benches, garden, etc.).



The proposal was submitted and completed at district meeting with neighbors dedicated to participatory budgets, where it was decided that it would be one of the ten proposals promoted collectively. In the first round of the process, the proposal was among the 15 most voted proposals for Arganzuela. However, it not managed to reach the second phase of voting because the technical staff of the city council decided to dismiss it, arguing that the installation of many of the fountains we were demanding was already covered included in the city council's budget for 2016. The feasibility report is silent on the rest of measures included in the proposal.

The proposal can be read in Decide Madrid's website (a City Council platform):

Improvement of the parks and playgrounds of the Arganzuela district
https://decide.madrid.es/participatory_budget/investment_projects/4744

First radio steps!

The idea of this fourth meeting, on Saturday, April 2, was to begin to enter the world of radio creation to develop the podcast that will report the outcome of our investigation. This time we have the collaboration of Patricia Horrillo, journalist from Radio Guerrilla and the educator Manuela Marcos.

There was a low influx of people, but very dedicated. As always in our sessions, long-term and new participants came. For starters, we split into two groups: parents in one group and children in the other.



Group of parents

At the beginning we gave a brief description of how to build the podcast from the next two sessions. And why instead of radio we're going to work with recordings made on mobiles and recording devices.

For the first part of the workshop, we ask them to think of contrasting sounds to create a soundscape through their voices. From that we can hear "what is" and "what we would like there to be" in the neighborhood of Arganzuela.

We said, first, sounds of the neighborhood that we like and we do not like. They listed many more of these (cars, traffic, etc.) but still came up with some positive sounds, which also indicate how we wish the city were (more noise of kids playing, water sources, birds, etc.).

For the second part, we asked them to think of the usual sounds of our daily life (getting up, coffee pot, alarm clock, metro, bedtime stories...) to create "Your day in 5 sounds". Besides imagining them, they recorded on the mobile and then share them with the group. They could find the actual sound they wanted or recreate or

dramatize them themselves. In the case that they were very complex, they could use the word. The results were quite cool.

They weren't too many of us and some parents with small kids couldn't give a 100% during the whole activity, but overall, people were very cooperative and participated brilliantly in the exercise. The experience served to record will be heard in many a locution (albeit very short) for the first time. All seemed to be at ease and part of the dynamics raised. They were active and responded positively to proposals form.

The exercises served as an introduction to radio, but they wasn't enough time to talk about the outline or how we want the program to be. It's also difficult to do this kind of work with such turnover of people, some coming for the first time, others waiting for the kids, etc.

The children group

We started asking some kids about what they understood by "journalist": "Someone who makes papers", "People who make the news". Building microphones with different objects, the older kids told the younger ones what a journalist does and how we were going to play journalist for a day. We created a mailbox with questions to prepare the interviews. The kids really got into the role (though for the younger ones was more abstract but they also enjoyed themselves). With microphones made of different materials, used as if they were real, we went to the Matadero Plaza to interview some passersby. The questions ranged from "How old are you?" to "What do you like about the neighborhood? It was interesting to go out and to be present in the outdoor facilities of Matadero. People saw us, asked question, and younger and older kids created teams to collaborate with each other. We did two valid interviews, to use in our future podcast.

Joining groups together! We didn't have much time left little and the kids were tired and hungry, but it was very good to hear the pieces each group had created, especially the Everyday Sounds piece from the adult group. We would have liked to do a practice recording altogether but there just wasn't time for everything, and the little ones were tired after so much activity we addressed. Finally, we made a dynamic activity of expression of emotions coordinated by Charo Soriano that left a good taste in everyone's mouth. It's now time to think about the next steps in continuing to build our podcast.

Closing day Chronicle of the Tribe of Arganzuela

On Saturday, April 23th, to close the activity program of the Tribe, we agreed to meet at the west end of the neighborhood, the area adjacent to Parque de Atenas, between the streets of Virgen del Puerto, Linneo and Juan Duque. Although

attendance was low, the resulting group was extremely dynamic. Unfortunately parents with small children left early, as the Emotional Map was designed for kids of 7 years and older, who without help, could get into the issue of emotions and choose the stickers autonomously or in agreement with the rest.



The activity allowed us to get to know through the participating neighbors, who took it on themselves to be the storytellers of their experiences and feelings about the neighborhood, in addition to describing the transformations that their streets have gone through and the “hottest” areas for caring for and socializing with kids.

These neighbors themselves were surprised by how powerful it is to tell people who don’t know about your neighborhood space. It made them stop at landmarks and discover new perspectives while shaping the story as they went along.

It was a delight to have this opportunity to do this activity, and get to know the neighborhood like a neighbor. The weather was ideal and the kids really got into the activity, as you can see on the maps above.

The activity was to walk the neighborhood, map in hand, with a legend indicating different moods, each represented by a color. The participants stopped at each significant space in the neighborhood and collectively we assigned symbols according to the legend. At the end, each participant chose his favorite neighborhood place and put their initials on the map.

We also made some recordings of what seemed important to us to express the neighborhood in the form of sounds as well of the stories that the neighbors told us.

The result of this sound space will be collected in the podcast that we are producing and presenting publicly in June in Intermediae, within the programming presentation of the results of the UCMM call.

Workshop voice with CoroFón



In the afternoon, we met in Intermediae with members of the choir CoroFón, who in a display of generosity, good vibes and professionalism gave us a playful workshop to familiarize us with our voices and melodies that they had chosen for us to develop our anthem.

Starting from a simple chorus, small groups composed verses to reach the final lyrics (fully open to suggestions!).

The lyrics are based on claims and proposals that we have been collecting in these months of research and activities.

Anthem lyrics

*We are from here, we are from everywhere
You'll see us in Arganzuela*

We dance in the streets

Greener and less polluted
Having a High School close
So we don't have to get up early

*We are from here, we are from everywhere
You'll see us in Arganzuela*

Roundabouts with ziplines
with bikes and common gardens to plant
Wide sidewalks by the schools
To walk freely

*We are from here, we are from everywhere
You'll see us in Arganzuela*

The tribe walks as friends
to school we'd like to walk
Covered spaces in winter
and parks without poo to step on

*We are from here, we are from everywhere
You'll see us in Arganzuela*

We want gleaming parks
with fountains where we can drink
We want a library
and enter the market finally

*We are from here, we are from everywhere
You'll see us in Arganzuela*

Other activities

Radio workshop in Miguel de Unamuno School

On April 27th we held a radio workshop at Miguel de Unamuno School, organized with the parents association. Along with Patricia Horrillo, we proposed the children that they become radio reporters and experiment with sounds.

We split into small groups and played with them to recreate the sounds related to the topics covered in the school's magazine *Nivola* and proposed that they imagined new sounds.

Roundtable 'Is this town for me?'



On 10th June we organized, together with EV Arganzuela, the roundtable talk 'Is this town for me?' with an outdoor cinema session. We talked with city planners Marta Roman town and Veronica Martinez about city mobility and children. After a picnic on the grass, we watched a documentary film, *Bikes VS Cars*.

We talked about how public space has been privatized, and how a space where much of the social life took place has become a place of passage in which cars have priority. Also, how breeding has become an individual process that has been locked in homes. The streets are no longer a playful space for children, who have been committed in three main areas: The home, school and playground.

We talked about how children do not make their own journeys like going from home to school, and how this makes them lose autonomy and ability to learn and appropriate the space. All these changes have had an impact in raising children, in which they are overprotected and treated to avoid any risk. Veronica and Marta told us about different initiatives that seek to promote child autonomy and mobility in space, such as school paths.

And we close with a party!

Party time for the Tribe! So we decided to hold a radio party the 25th of June in the street for the children of the neighborhood, linking several of the central points

that have structured the project since its inception. It was a day to gather the fruits of our labor and summarize conclusions, even if they're still open.

The day began with the setting-up of the space. [Intermediae](#) helped us make the square we chose look cool and pretty, with the installation of an awning to protect us from the sun, a mailbox to collect suggestions and huge posters of the tribe who decorated the space.



Plaza de los Comunes, Anticapitalist locale, generously lent us some logistic support: chairs, tables and a portable battery for Patri and Juan Carlos from [Radio Guerrilla](#) so they could install the portable radio studio. In addition, the day before we had prepared the appetizer: several liters of lemonade to drink and snacks, melon and watermelon, for the guests.

Gradually the public and the first guests started arriving. Patri and Juan Carlos opened the program with a beautiful tune for La Tribu and an interview with Silvia and Irene, the project coordinators. Gradually various people involved at different stages of the Tribe took part of the Guerrilla radio show, including Arlo and Alma, two kids; Charo, from the Parents' Association of Miguel de Unamuno Public School; Angel from citizen's collective EV Arganzuela; Sara, Selina and Paqui from *One City, Many Worlds* Intermediae project; Toni Garcia and Romy Arce, from the

District Board... In addition, we listened to audio clips from different moments of the project: the [walk through the Linneo neighborhood](#), [Marta Roman and Veronica Martinez's talk](#), the [radio workshop at Miguel de Unamuno Public School](#)...

In parallel, we started the activities prepared by the friends of the [La Revoltosa Garden](#), which had organized a scarecrow workshop for the young ones. In addition, some neighbors planted flowers and aloe in some empty tree pits, while little ones roamed the square armed with water pistols.

After the activities in the garden, friends of [CoroFón](#) chorus gave a dynamic voice workshop with everyone present, which ended with a rendition of the [Anthem of the Tribe](#) to put the finishing touch to the radio program and the day.

With this street meeting in Plaza Peñuelas, one of the geographic midpoints of this large district, we wanted to celebrate a year of research and meetings with the different tribes of Arganzuela. We hope that this final celebration may be one more link in the chain of revitalization of the neighborhood regarding children and childcare.



3_Evaluation

La Tribu in Arganzuela arose as a process of creation and research in which the caregivers and families were the protagonists. Their experiences would be the starting point and, through artistic practice, we wanted imagine other possible and more desirable ways of bringing up children.

We believe these initial objectives have been more than fulfilled, although throughout the entire process the project has changed and we have had to adapt our premises to the reality of the participants.

For example, after the experience of *Juanita's walk* and the first session, we realized we had a adult-centered starting point. The activities that we proposed were too long and it was difficult for families to attend. In addition, initially we had conceived the presence of children in the sessions in a separate space with a

caregiver, while the adults worked and debated.



The participants did see these limitations and asked us to incorporate the children in the sessions. We decided to restructure the workshop: they would be shorter (two hours), less ambitious and more targeted. With the help of the educator Manuela Marcos we proposed dynamics where children were the protagonists. We learned to make room for new things to happen, to adapt the dynamics on the fly, and assume certain level of chaos and improvisation, inevitable when adults and children are together. But above all, we discovered that the participation of children, with their boundless imagination and willingness to experiment, enriched greatly the workshops.

Another limitation we found was the homogeneity and lack of diversity of the group that attended the workshops. Overall, participants were middle class heterosexual couples, college educated, with liberal professions, etc. While there has been a fairly balanced participation between women and men, we wish we had been more diverse families: LGBT families, single parents, grandmothers and grandfathers, aunts and uncles... We also wished that people from different, social classes or ages had participated.

Although one of our initial goals was precisely to avoid this homogeneity and try to form a socially diverse group, we recognize that we have failed to involve other social sectors. We believe this is due to several reasons: the Cultural Center where the sessions are held, Matadero Madrid, and the language and aesthetics we use, somehow predetermine the type of audience. Aware of this, we tried to open the project, holding sessions outside Matadero, in the Peñuelas Square, or going to Miguel de Unamuno public school to present the project and do a workshop.

On the other hand, we must bear in mind that the project has just arrived in the district: establishing ties and building a community with different groups is a long process that takes time and that cannot be done in a few months. In this regard, it should be noted that this is a shared problem with many other political and social initiatives of the district (and the city itself), which also tend to be formed by fairly homogeneous groups and that find great difficulties to appeal to migrants and impoverished people, for example.



We also had to adapt to the reality of the participants our initial goal of creating a solid and constant group that would participate throughout the process. Attendance to the workshops was uneven and the composition of the group changed in every new session, in which new faces and familiar faces mixed. Participation in the workshops is not easy to combine with family obligations and vicissitudes (sometimes kids get sick, have a birthday, or go out for the weekend...). Even so, people that have attended have been very much involved in the dynamics we proposed them. Also, sending articles about the sessions through the mailing list has served to keep everyone up to date about the project.

In this sense, we can say that the group of people that have attended the workshops have formed a loose “tribe”, consisting of many of the “tribes” that can be found in Arganzuela. Indeed, one of the things that we have noticed is that we could not aspire to be THE tribe of Arganzuela. On one hand, the district is so big that is very difficult to run into each other. Secondly, as the participants told us, there are many other tribes in the area. Thus, the project has helped us to get to know these different tribes and put them in touch.

In fact, one of the virtues of this project has been its ability to involve and entangle many of the initiatives, organizations and groups of the Arganzuela district. Thus, we have made alliances with Espacio Vecinal Arganzuela, with the urban gardens of La Sanchita and La Revoltosa, with Miguel de Unamuno School Parents’ Association, with the free nursery El Palomar, with the local Participatory Budgeting, with the District Board and with the social center La Plaza de los Comunes. There have also been very productive meetings with other projects of the call *Una ciudad, muchos mundos*, especially with the Diálogos Electroflamencos project and its choir El Corofón. Many of these alliances have been possible thanks to our “advisory council”, formed by people involved in many of these initiatives, which have helped us to contact them. We have also worked with groups outside the district, such as Radio Guerrilla, Nation Rotonda or Paseo de Jane.

In short, this process has been for us a discovery of the “tribes” of the district, a way of taking root in the neighborhood. We now have a much more complex and rich view of Arganzuela, especially from children’s point of view.

4_ Considerations on upbringing, urban planning and cities

Support networks for upbringing: the tribes

During these months we have learned that the need for a dense network of support and assistance is especially needed in the early years of breeding (when the baby is from 0 to 3 years old). Caring for a baby is a very demanding and difficult task that is hard to combine with the heavy rhythms of work and daily life. Therefore, caregivers (who are mostly women) feel isolated. Many people who have attended the workshops of the Tribe with children of that age shared that feeling and expressed the need to share experiences and meet with families in similar situations.

In Madrid nursery schools are a scarce and expensive commodity, and alternative options (nannies and babysitters, unpaid leaves from work, alternative schools, etc.) are economically unaffordable for much of the population. Those who can not afford these options rely on the help of grandmothers (and, to a lesser extent, grandparents), or decide that one of the parents, usually the woman, will reduce their working hours or directly leave their jobs to take care of the children.

In the first years of a baby's age, many mothers and parents feel helpless; have the need to share experiences, to discuss their doubts about health issues, education, and care. As the author Carolina del Olmo says: nowadays there are little family or neighborhood networks that can fulfill those needs. Women, who used to be depositories and disseminators of such knowledge, have been stripped of this function and replaced by a myriad of experts: parenting books and manuals, gurus, breastfeeding counselors, etc. This situation of isolation and helplessness has led to the opening of a whole market niche.



We have also seen how this sense of isolation is attenuated when children begin to attend school. There it's easier to mingle and bond, and to socialize the upbringing with other families. Children make friends, attend school activities, go to the park together, celebrate birthdays... As we have seen with Miguel de Unamuno public school, parents associations are a great space to create "tribes": families get in touch with other parents, organize joint activities, collaborate to improve the school, etc. It should be noted that these associations are usually a space with an overwhelming female majority.

However, once the school ends and holidays begin we see an obvious incompatibility between the world of work and school. If during the school year families can juggle more or less the taking care of the children and having a job, when the holidays begin families have a hard time to arrange the care of their children.

The possibility of an upbringing that exceeds the current isolation, in which care and responsibilities can be shared, would need:

- A change of mentality regarding the upbringing and care of children. It is necessary to stop seeing children as a private problem that parents have to solve on their own. It is necessary to assume that care and education are social issues that not only affect mothers and fathers, and that care-work has to be fairly and equitably distributed between women and men.
- To generate community structures and networks that enable the rebuilding of social ties and overcome the individualist isolation.

- To radically transform the world of labor so it adapts to our basic needs and to care-work, not the other way around.
- To transform cities so they can be at the service of people, taking into account their diversity and different needs. Facilitate that we can move by foot or by public transport, create public open spaces that make encounter and coexistence easier, etc.

Children and the city

"We used to be able to play throughout the whole city and now we can just do it in some small spaces, like playgrounds". This phrase of one of the participants in the workshops illustrates how in a few decades the urban landscape has changed radically. Children have practically disappeared from the streets, a space that they used to explore and enjoy on their own.

Today the streets have become places where they always move accompanied by an adult. Nowadays children are held in two main areas: home and school. As if they were a protected species, children are kept outside in small reserves: playgrounds. These "corralito parks", as one of the participant called them, are squeezed between buildings and cars, and only allow a few types of games.

How has this change happened? On one hand, urban development has prioritized cars and transport over any other uses: the streets are filled with cars and have thus become more dangerous. In addition, the growth of cities has led to the segregation of residential areas, industrial areas and workplaces. The lack of life and activity on the streets makes them more dangerous. It is difficult to find those safety nets formed by the informal surveillance exercised by neighbors that Jane Jacobs described in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

Also, cities -streets, public spaces, facilities and institutional buildings, shops...- are not designed for children (or for many other groups). Their presence is seen as annoying and as a nuisance.



This process has been accompanied by the extension of a model that encourages overprotection in breeding. Children are seen as a scarce and precious commodity and parents try to avoid all possibility of risk in their lives. Children should not go out alone on the street, nothing dangerous should happen to them, etc.

What consequences have the disappearance of children from the streets? As urban planners Marta and Veronica Martinez told us, children are not responsible for their travels and do not develop skills such as orientation or space observation. This means a loss of autonomy: they are not able to go anywhere alone, have no abilities to orient themselves if they are lost. The feeling of belonging to a place is undermined because they are unable to explore it freely.

Moreover, this lack of autonomy has a clear gender bias. Parents are much more permissive with boys than with girls. Girls are introduced into the public space with the mandate of self-protection. As Marta Roman and Begoña Pernas explain in the book *¡Hagan sitio, por favor!*: "Since they are girls, women internalize the risk and learn that their behavior is crucial to protect themselves. (...) These strategies are almost as victimizing as the crime itself: stay locked up, don't go where you want".

This model also has consequences for parents. While decades ago children spent much of their time playing in the street without adult supervision, nowadays parents must now devote much of their time to watch them while they are playing in the street, or to entertain them at home. Parents have new care responsibilities that include transporting children from home to school, the park, school activities, etc.

To reverse this situation is essential to encourage children's freedom and autonomy to move. As some mothers expressed in our roundtable on Children and city, it is no easy task, since today is an anomaly see a child alone on the street. Therefore, it is necessary that these measures be assumed collectively, involving, for example, the educational community so that children can walk alone to school.

Recommendations for the district

Here are some of the recommendations and proposals that we have collected these months in order to make Arganzuela a more welcoming and children friendly district.

Mobility and accessibility

It is necessary to reduce the space available for private transport and to prioritize public transport and cycling. This involves reducing the number of lanes for cars to replace them with bus or bicycle lanes; to prioritize journeys on foot in urban design; or to set limits to traffic. These measures, in addition to improving mobility in the neighborhood, contribute to lower levels of pollution.

To promote the realization of school routes in all schools the district, so that children can walk on their own to school.

Mark and signal the entrances to schools, reduce the traffic in those areas and increase the sidewalks in those entrances.

Parks and green spaces

Arganzuela has the advantage of having extensive and well-equipped parks such as Madrid Rio or Tierno Galvan Park. However, for many people these areas are far away from home and they can only visit them in the weekends. Therefore, the district has to improve its proximity parks, those that are close to families' homes or schools.

The parks have to be spaces that allow intergenerational meetings and encounters. To do this, they need to be open and unfenced spaces, to have shaded and rest areas, to be equipped with water fountains and to have extensive vegetation. The facilities and swings should be versatile and allow multiple uses.

It is necessary to regulate and support the urban gardens of the district, so that they can be maintained and taken care of. The gardens are privileged spaces for relationship and community building, favor the encounter between people of different generations and allow girls and boys learn about the environment, to take care of the plants, to cultivate, etc.



Facilities

Arganzuela requires educational facilities that respond to the needs of a population of 150,000 people. The construction of a new high school and more elementary schools is necessary because the district schools are overcrowded.

We need more public and free preschools for children less than 3 years old. It is necessary to increase the number of vacancies because nowadays there are too few. These schools need to be educational projects with qualified personnel and decent working conditions, open to the participation of the educational community. It is important to have more flexible schedules in order to meet the diverse needs of the families.

It is necessary to expand the options for raising-up children outside the home. For example, covered spaces where families can go when it rains or it's cold, where they can stay without paying a fee and where people of different ages can meet. Or, another example: the City Hall can also assign municipal spaces for families to come together and share the care of children.

In this regard, we think that the proposal of Espacio Vecinal Arganzuela to reform the former Market of Fruit and Vegetables, now abandoned, is very positive. It pretends to create a community and cultural center for the neighborhood that can become an intergenerational meeting place for community building.

5_Next steps and future of the project

Having concluded the first part of the project Caring IN the city, focused on documenting the process of The Tribe of Arganzuela, we now face the second phase. In it we will explore different experiences of raising children in urban contexts in Europe: what public policies are underway, how parents organize themselves, how care-work is distributed, etc. In September we will visit experiments that deal with care-work and parenting in Sevilla and Barcelona, and fly to Finland with the aim of learning from another Idea Maker, Ylva Rancken-Lutz, and her research on first-time parenting in urban and suburban settings in Sweden, Finland and Denmark. This process will be summarized in video chronicles and a report that will also include a series of proposals in order to make care-friendly cities and care communities.

As for the project The Tribe of Arganzuela, we are exploring different possibilities to continue with it. We are looking for financing to expand it to other neighborhoods and districts of Madrid, to replicate the experience with other groups and make recommendations for child-friendly districts.

Once we finish our research in 2016, we would also like to continue with it to explore other care-work and parenting experiences in other European countries, as well as the public policies that are underway. We would like to learn the state of this question in Europe and how other models function to know what measures to adopt. These way we will have a broader picture of “care issue” in Europe and will be able to raise awareness on the importance of placing it outside the private space and at the center of the political, social and economic debates.

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[La tribu en Arganzuela.](#)

[Photo album of The Tribe in Arganzuela.](#)