

Human beings are born  
to care. Our institutions  
stimulate or depress the  
human capacity of care.

Jane Dutton, 2017

In the world there is nothing  
more abundant than pain,  
disconsolation, disruption.  
There is nothing more  
necessary than offering  
trust, peace or time.

Antonio Lafuente, 2020

This methodology is the result of the research by  
Marília Guarita for the master degree in the Program  
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# Intro duc tion

This publication is the systematization of care practices, from the everyday point of view within an innovation citizen laboratory, LAB Procomum; a converting conceptualization about the Commons, Innovation Citizen Laboratory, the Body and Care, along with a cartography of experiences, knowledge, interviews, stories and narratives so that collective spaces that propose the practice of the commons can operate FROM / arising out of care and FOR/ in consideration of car (from/for) .

In these years as an observer and director of resources in Instituto Procomum, the institute responsible for the LAB Procomum, me and all others involved in this construction got to understand why care is the premise and condition for any construction of a citizen innovation lab, in the attempt to ensure healthy environments so that a community can forge itself, participate, attend and construct, from their singularities, the experience of the Commons among the different bodies .

If the commons is a political and socioeconomic alternative, a lens through which we can look at different areas and find new models of self organization, we can say that care paves the practices of the Commons, a measure that materializes and embodies it . This “becoming Commons” often sounds distant or not palpable, yet in practice, in the daily life at LAB Procomum, approaches the simplicity of caring for one another, living and producing a collective life arising out of the singularities, histories, memories and existence of each body.





# Editorial

## Care is an collective practice

by Marina Guzzo, who is an artist, professor, mother, caregiver, investigator and was the advisor of the research that originated this publication.

“Omwana takulila nju emoi” - Bantu saying, literally translated as: “a child is not raised in a single home”. This phrase was popularly widespread as “it takes a village to raise a child”. Based on this knowledge I think that care, since we were born, is a collective practice.

But the patriarchal capitalism and the work regime to which we are subjected makes us believe that care is something individual and feminine, forgetting the fact that care is what makes our lives livable. Caring and being cared for is vital for the sustainment of collective life; it is care what differentiates us from barbarism, teaching we depend on the other, that the other depends on us and that we can take care not only of ourselves, but also of the earth, the water, the plants, the animals, the air and every tangled web, visible and invisible, that weaves terrestrial existence.



Care is always relational! The notion, however, has primarily been identified with health professionals; people, communities as well as institutions. We do not learn to care in a systematic way. This makes it necessary to produce and organize knowledge, as well as research, practices and experiments, to expand the formative paths of care which deconstruct this kind of split between knowing, doing and feeling.

In this small and precious publication it is evident that it is not possible (and will not be possible) to separate knowing and feeling and that this, perhaps, would be an interesting path for institutions and communities that want to advance this practice and this direction. The methodology proves that care is an axis running through all the aspects of making the commons: from management to dream, from encounters to disagreements, from communication to touch, from territory to utopia. Caring is the establishment of a body that is present, attentive and engaged. A body that is involved and rejoices in the encounter with another, that celebrates and learns from failure and the

difficulties that it is to be together in the light of our differences.

The proposal helps us to forge minor gestures, focussing on the power of small movements that function as nets of resistance and possible ways to act collectively against processes of illness, exclusion, racism and domestication of contemporary ways of living. It makes us think it is not enough to look at care merely in the moment of practicing care itself, but in every relational care practice so that all bodies can be present and attentive to what happens to them, also at other moments.

Thinking about care, love, touch and movements from the practice operated from this perspective, does not only expand the view on life, but also opposes contemporary hegemonic policies and biopowers, imposed on the health system, attention to the body and the subjectivity.

If health through the lens of the Commons is a collective, diverse and procedural know-how, it is not sufficient to be born and survive: we want to live more and enhance the power of the dream of an interesting life!





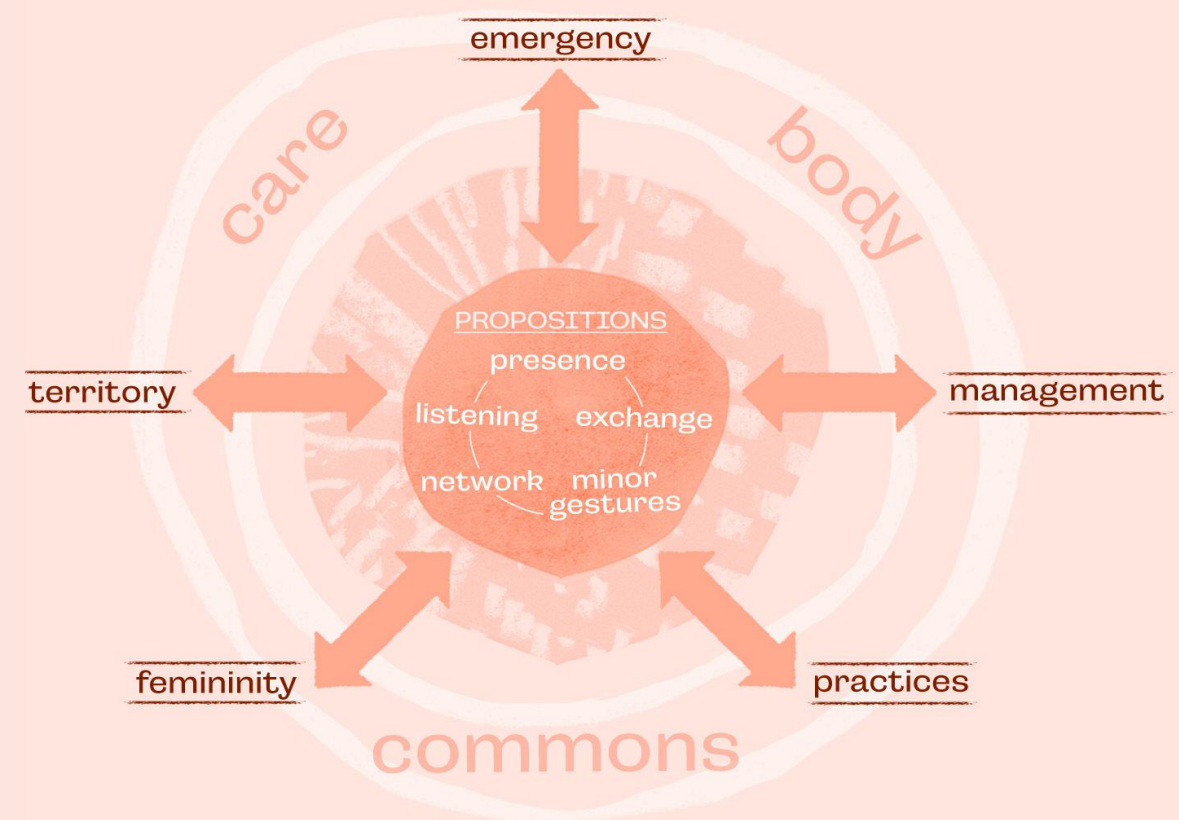
# 1 The commons as care and care as the commons

Care (of oneself, the other and us) seems to be the base that organizes the communities and protocols managed by this community. If there is no Commons without community and protocols, there is no healthy community and effective protocols without care.

The stories of Procomum mapped for the construction of this methodology are charged with potent encounters, poetic subtleties and also errors, mistakes, remorse, grief, frustrations and disappointments throughout this journey.

If the Commons is an open concept, in permanent dispute and running the risk of being captured precisely by what it combats, experiencing it with its paradoxes and crossroads is what permits us to understand how care is embodied and how it materializes the practices of the Commons.

The device proposed here was outlined with the premise of being something alive and unfinished and with the understanding of which space we occupy, what our driving forces are and how all of this connects with the Commons.







## 2 Structured axes for care

As we delve into the concepts (academic and nonacademic), in the observation of the dynamics in the different communities occupying the space of LAB Procomum and in the governance relations who constitute it, we understand that the laboratory of Procomum is, above all, and in all its integrality, a space of care.

Therefore, in LAB Procomum care does not only operate as one or more projects (middle or end) but more so it is established transversally (middle and end) throughout the projects, people and processes that occupy this space where the collective action is a true laboratory of solutions for other possibilities of life.

Through the mapping of the different stories of LAB Procomum we observe the 05 structured axes that act like theoretical concepts and diverse knowledge about the Commons and function as the entrance and exit gates of care; as they guide care practices, within a collective environment that experiences the commons, they give rise to the paths of care and serve as indicators of execution, evaluation, testing and adjustments.

Such axes function as living vectors of care to establish an embodied practice, touching the dimension of everyday life, of the non-dissociation between micro and macro.



## Axis 1: Feminine

They are referred to as collective and, at times, invisible tactics of care, developed by women throughout history; what Silvia Federici (2017) considered as invisible work, what comes before production but what is at the heart of the reproduction of life and without which it would not be possible. Bringing the dimension of feminine potential and ancestrality to structure other forms of organizations and execution of demands generally (not only those of care) runs through the feminine axis.

*... these relations that are produced in daily life allow an experience of generating an infrastructure able to reproduce the most basic life material... Affectionwork of women... It is an indispensable job for the functioning of everyday life and has to do with a certain ability to contour and cushion the most difficult moments.*

Alana Moraes, 2018.

### How it was at LAB Procomum:

“Women and the commons” was a journey of four meetings throughout 2017 guided by Bianca Santana and Lia Rangel (respectively counselor and founder of Instituto Procomum), within LAB Procomum, in which we explored, in women circles, what a world and an organization based on the feminine and feminism would look like. In this experience we lived a proposal, based on the feminine, to structure, realize and celebrate essential and enduring passages in the constitution of the institution’s most varied flows and processes.



## Axis 2: Territories

It refers to a wide and uninterrupted seam that must be sewn between the pulse of the territory and the interaction of the partners, running through people, leaders, resources, public equipment, institutions, legislations and public politics. Allying as translocal powers, building knowledge collectively and seeking joint solutions to the adversities that we face.

*... A minor dance, created here,  
therefore would be the proposition...  
that highlights the necessary passages  
for the commons encounter, between  
people and choreographic propositions,  
with a focus on the potency of small  
movements that act as a network of  
resistance and possible ways of acting  
and creating collectively.*

Marina Guzzo, 2021.

### How it was at LAB Procomum:

Understanding and realizing that the LAB is a laboratory of citizen innovation and not a clinic permitted us to have clarity of the limits of the institution and simultaneously recognize our resources and weave our possibilities of care with our communities. This way, the institutional partnerships and territories proved to be vital in the process of mapping and accessing local networks of care.



## Axis 3: Management

This refers to the layers of the everyday within the space and / or the institution, especially impacting the team, projects and internal processes.

*The commons is dangerous for a heterosocial and domestic world because it makes up collective forms and companions to live life – among species, between genders...*

Alana Moraes, 2020.

### How it was at LAB Procomum:

We observed how care practices and politics, which gradually were (and continue to be) interwoven at LAB Procomum, arise from internal experiences, from the daily life of the LAB team, paying attention to “how” it is done, capturing exposed disappointments, agreements, renegotiations and new attempts in the direction of careful assertiveness, together with the team, community, partners and funders.



## Axis 4: Practices

This relates to the main activities performed in the collective space that intend to take care.

*The idea that there is no Commons without the process of producing it deserves our attention because it reinforces the notion that the Commons is a path, in constant movement.*  
Rodrigo Savazoni, 2018.

### How it was at LAB Procomum:

In the case of LAB Procomum, the activities are, in their majority, passages from Colaboradora, the open, independent and free school, and from the Work and Study groups, with training and prototype development in which care became an experimental beginning, middle and end for those participating in the meetings. It would be of no use to encourage a propositional structure, based on care, if the final activities do not reverberate its intention.



## Axis 5: Emergency

It deals with extreme situations in which care tends to be disregarded, due to the agility and readiness that such emergency situations demand, with structured actions based on improvised, urgent and elementary methodologies, demonstrating how care, in emergency situations, can be the principle common good of a community and how this needs to act.

*A moment in which individual suffering and despair find, precisely, a new dimension capable of producing implications and interdependencies. The "healing" is produced by these various displacements. The first one has to do with the recognition of the vulnerability of the other, the second with the new lived spatiality beyond the house and the domestic space and a new radical commonsality, the third displacement touches upon the moment of new implications and responsibilities for collective life, the "becoming of someone who matters" because one is able to make the demands "work"...*

Alana Moraes, 2018.

### How it was at LAB Procomum:

In 2020, with the coronavirus pandemic, the Procomum Institute, together with 03 other organizations, formed the Baixada for Life Front. During this process we were able to experience micro opening processes for displacements and unlearning. We had to unlearn our habits and certainties in that moment which

charged quick movements: observing the strengths and weaknesses of oneself and of the other, individually and institutionally to make room for a balanced dose of intuition and rationality in the collective structures and tools that were being created.



The background of the page is an abstract composition of warm, earthy tones. It features large, overlapping shapes in shades of peach, light orange, and pale yellow. A prominent, dark, swirling line, resembling a thick brushstroke or a calligraphic flourish, curves across the lower-left portion of the page. The overall texture is soft and painterly, with subtle variations in color and tone that create a sense of depth and movement.

# 3 Propositions for care

From the axis that emerged from the cartography of the experiences at LAB Procomum – it was possible to perceive values and permanent patterns that promoted the identification of forces that permeate the feminine, territory, gestures, practices and emergency. We call these forces “PROPOSITIONS”.

These propositions are consolidated by the observation of experiences with the formulations, especially from the following researchers: Bianca Santana, Lia Rangel, Mario Rodrigues, Erin Manning, Alana Moraes, Luciane Ramos, Marina Guzzo, Flavia Liberman, Omolaji Àgbára, Gayatri Spivak e Guacira Oliveira .



*Investigating in listening and hospitality is an investment in the "most human" of being.*  
Leonardo Boff.

#### Proposition and practice within LAB Procomum:

Listening for care/as caring is activated when different bodies are permitted to share pain and lessons; when we believe that within management, learning to communicate well is a movement of care towards oneself and the other; when we conceive our practices under the premise of listening to diversified wisdom; when we envision listening as a cure for a territory; when we make room for hospitality and dialogue even when it seems there is no time for the other in the face of everyday life that imposes urgencies.

## Proposition 1: Listening To yourself and the other

There are many methodologies available today to improve the act of listening. This is because it becomes increasingly evident that it is possible to equip oneself to qualify listening and that the commons is organized based on the foundation of differences and the possible tension of the construction between those differences. The experience between the conflicts as a way of transformation and change demands seeking the resistances and removing false or superficial harmony. It is the ability of welcoming and dialogue that extracts the innovative potency that emerges from the conflicts. Therefore it is fundamental to understand that welcoming is not to pacify, temporize or homogenize, but instead to permit the existence of all different parts, including the most gloomy. It is radically accepting plurality, the difference and all the consequences, including the consequence of constructing the Commons. And the predisposition in welcoming and listening to the other is also a movement for automatic listening and automatic welcoming. This proposition does not inhibit the occurrence of resistance and clashes, but ensures that they can be overcome by loving coexistence, emerged with the biggest impulse dimension of otherness, in respect, so vital for the constructing of collective environments.



*Community does not only create abundance – community is abundance. If we could learn this equation from the world of nature, the human world would be transformed.*

Parker Palmer, 2017.

#### Proposition and practice within LAB Procomum:

The networks and communities of care are forged when the female participants perceive the differences among each other and, even so, connect in order to take care of themselves; when we cherish the singularities for collective management; when we reaffirm in our practices the promotion and strengthening of support networks; when we depend on network collaboration to create solutions for living together and be strong enough to face a pandemic.

## Proposition 2: Networks and communities There is no cure that is not collective

The encounter with the collective, the constitution of communities and the formation of networks presents itself as a possible cure by producing implications, interdependencies and dislocalizations, which have to do with the belonging to something, having responsibilities with a group, with “becoming someone who matters” (MORAES, 2018, p.73). By radically collectivizing, it breaks with the merely representative character to also exist from the encounters and the collaborative production of knowledge. Therefore, the interaction dynamics that the Commons implies to realize awakens, teaches and embodies another form of living, with subjectivities articulated to the collective and freeing itself from individualistic structural layers. Ensuring care in collective spaces is collectivizing care in all instances; investing and strengthening the most diverse communities so that, in the end, in addition to all their actions, they also form networks of care.



*'Give your match, but smoke it together'.  
I like this Yorubá quote, as it teaches  
us the value of partnership and placing  
yourself not as an altruist, but more like  
a companion of the person to whom you  
wish to contribute. [...] it also teaches  
us about, whenever possible, disposing  
ourselves as partners, being together,  
doing for the other, but without forgetting  
ourselves. Altruism is a Western and fragile  
perspective.*

Omoloji Àgbára Dúdú.

#### Proposition and practice within LAB Procomum:

Exchanges permeate care by promoting encounters between different people, such as when the participants of citizen innovation circuits are invited to bring their knowledge to the group; by valuing the displacement of protagonists to manage and compose the commons; by reinforcing the invitation to autonomy and emancipation within our practices, by establishing the exchanges with the territory and the community as fundamental to weave care processes in emergency situations or not.

### Proposition 3: **Exchange** Restoring the collective intelligence

Giving, receiving and returning. The relations, encounters and doing as two-way paths, in which care is established based on the logic of reciprocity. A permanent willingness to be part of a gear that depends on the complementarity of knowledge and of the collaboration, and that invites everyone to be learners, professors, evaluators, narrators, etc. It is from the interdisciplinary exchange relationships that we construct qualified spaces for listening and experimentation, with the presence of time and resources, open to failure and misunderstanding, inherent to the collective processes. This way we can dream of the construction of a healthy ecosystem, carefully, that reproduces a system appropriate for the territory, boosting and strengthening the logic of collaboration.



*Small everyday choreographies that change the positions of bodies, time and spaces.*

Marina Guzzo, 2021.

Proposition and practice  
within LAB Procomum:

A citizen innovation laboratory is made by minor gestures of care. It is sitting in a circle, cooking and cleaning together, sharing food, creating fissures in management confrontations, going to distant places so that people afar can also experiment with “communing”, dancing and performing for the territory and with the territory; it is asking, before starting a reunion, “How are you today? Can I do something for you?”.

Proposition 4:  
**Minor Gestures**  
Uninterrupted fissures

Developing and investing in micropolitics and minor gestures as strategies of activism and resistance of care, understanding that these concepts are not about small gestures. Such a characterization is not necessarily marginal or linked to minorities; they may go unnoticed or be strategically confused with subtleties, but their possibilities resides in uninterrupted fissures; precisely because they are smaller they have not yet been fully constituted, they open up to new possibilities and activations, generally, with less resistance, as the processes tend to be more relevant than the relation to the cause and effect of every gesture.



*Presence does nothing extraordinarily appear, but it marks the emergency of something very ordinary and turns it into an event: the nature of humankind as an embodied mind. Therefore, the daily existence gets experienced as extraordinary – transformed and even transfigured.*

Erika Fisher-Lichte, 2012.

#### Proposition and practice within LAB Procomum:

The qualified presence enables listening beyond hearing, understanding exchanges as giving, receiving and reciprocating, perceiving the feminine as an existing way of doing, envisioning networks and communities of care; being present does not necessarily mean having control over the unfolding of the present; it is under the effect of what cannot be measured - the presence - which produces the subjectivities to establish the Commons.

## Proposition 5: Presence From the ordinary to the extraordinary

“By presence is understood the capacity moved by the desire of being simultaneously in the same time and space in which one is. In the present, with attention and willingness” (FEDERICI e GUZZO, 2020). The propositions mentioned above may be considered as activators of being and being present as they demand a state of presence; all of them can be activated in different states. Evoking qualified presence, however, as a linear, intermittent and continuous phenomenon in a collective context, with so many distractions, is perhaps the greatest act of care for yourself and for the other.



## Emergency:

when time is urgent; when plans and priorities are captured;  
when care is vital but can easily be omitted .

## Territory:

space and people; where, who and  
what, where one is heard and for  
whom it is done ; partners and allies.

## Feminine:

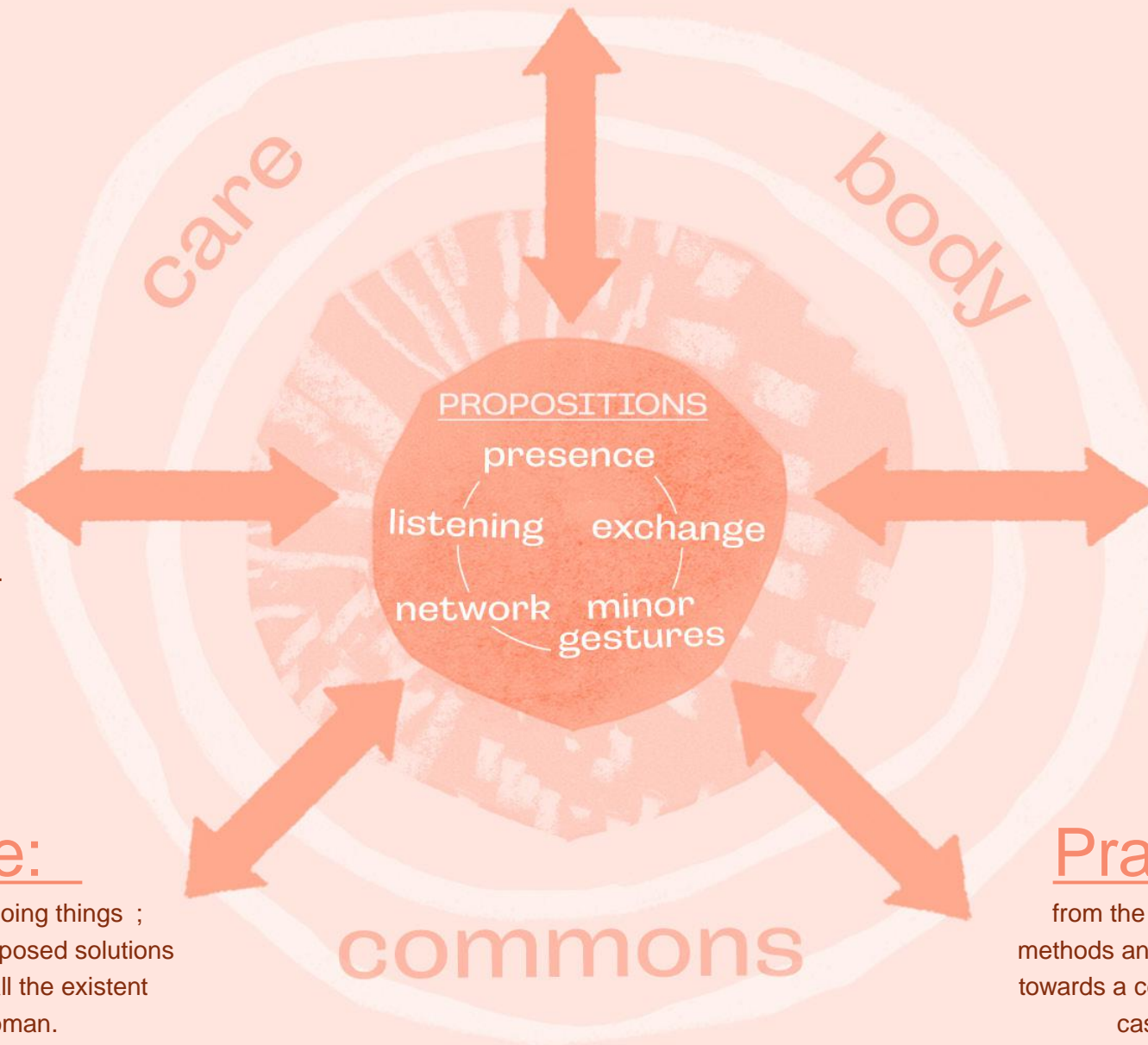
women, in plural; a way of doing things ;  
perceived necessities and proposed solutions  
from and to the end of, for all the existent  
forms of being a woman.

## Management:

from the inside to the inside ; internal  
flows; processes, protocols and  
indicators that ensure functioning,  
in this case, based on care.

## Practices:

from the inside to the outside ;  
methods and methodologies that lead  
towards a certain way of doing, in this  
case, based on care.







# 4 Final note

Within the process of making the Commons, in which the relevance of subjectivities are as well constituent as a dominant instrument, a limited conception of care is not sufficient for us. It is necessary to have an emancipated perspective, in which care is presented as that which makes existence possible in order to create new normativities. Cecílio (2009) complements to this, affirming that the management of care can be understood as “provision or disponibility of health technologies, according to the unique needs of every person, at different moments of life and aiming at well being, safety and autonomy in order to live a productive and happy life.”

Within this definition of care, we find consonance with the words of Massimo De Angelis (2006), “there is no commons without communing”: a good commons is simultaneously a “noun” - that what is shared (care) and a “verb” - the action of sharing; the commonsing, the “making the commons” (care).

By systematizing this methodology in which the collective spaces are based on the feminine, territory, practice, management and possible emergencies, we managed to dispute new models of care with the possibility of an alternative autonomy and at the same time being shared, decentralized and connected to the territorial demands and others.

A new order that embodies care as the center of relations, through a body that opens up to exchanges, presence, community, listening and minor gestures with yourself, others and with the environment.





# Closure

## Care is a verb

By Lucia Nader, human rights activist, political scientist and admirer of people and organizations who seek their political compass in care.

Care is a verb. Intransitive and controversial, like love in Mário de Andrade. Interpersonally and daily, as in Bell Hooks. Caring and individual, relational and collective. It is taking care of oneself, of the other, of us. Caring is being present, listening, exchanging, networking and minor gestures, as dear Marília reminds us in this beautiful and potent publication.

Being an activist is acting to care and caring while acting. It is being preoccupied with care for and during the effective practice of transforming reality. It is the allowance to be and feel. Before, during and after acting. The pain of an activist is a lot. As well as the guilt and the responsibility. It is the feelings that move us and pack our actions. But it is also what weakens us if they are not cared for and are being felt in their entirety.

Being an activist is taking care of the power of each of us. It is taking care of the power that sprouts internally and gives us the drive to transform reality. It is taking care of how we nourish and sustain the force and necessary discomfort to act. It is taking care of the power of our roots. And it is also rooting oneself in the practices of care that potentialize our individual potency and help us navigate our contradictions, collectively.



Being an activist is taking care of the power in our relations and organizations. It is looking at and caring about our way of relating and organizing ourselves in order to act. It is paying attention to the details and to the whole. It is challenging the structural and external power, rooted in patriarchal and capitalist structures. Caring is always being attentive to not replicate the worst of these structures in the relations and organizations we constructed to challenge them. Care is practicing the commons between us.

Being an activist is to bet on the diversity of care. Activism is essential, complex and uncompromising. Just as care. Being an activist is paying attention to care as a concept in dispute and in eternal construction. Care does not have a fixed answer. Care is universal in its essence and it is unique and exclusive to every person. It is all this and more than this. It is a little bit, every day. And it is a lot. It is a political option for the life we choose to live.

Caring is being. Caring is feeling. Caring is acting. Being an activist is to be, feel, act and care. Alone and collectively.

Activism cures if there is awareness of what nourishes and drains us, individually, in our relationships and within our organizations. Activism cures when it is done with presence, listening, exchanging, networking and minor gestures. With care. Without this, it sickens.







In the end,  
everything is light  
and we light up in  
others.

Mia Couto, 2016

Translated by: Nicole Kuiper



# Care in the construction of the commons

A methodology of care  
for collective spaces

*By Marília Guarita*



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