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Project Name: A Garden for Care: Reclaiming Control

This project comprises a garden within residential units, designed for female victims of domestic violence, along with their children. In understanding the user, we investigated how the cycle of abuse can be transformed into a unique process of regaining confidence, with the last step being the woman empowered to plan for the future. This linear process was translated into a flexible journey to recovery. The main key elements as developed in the design were the idea of regaining control as means of empowerment through enabled decision making and connection to the rest of the environment and oneself, leading to the ability to regain trust. Thus, the garden becomes a context within which the users are given a sense of control of their process of recovery. It is interpreted as a three-dimensional gradient to recovery, having degrees of control with respect to oneself (y-axis), to insiders (x-axis) and outsiders (z-axis). The garden becomes a whole spatial journey having a most inner enclave which transitions to the border with the outside, that becomes the pinnacle of recovery. From a more dense environment, it opens up and becomes lighter as one reaches the boundary. This gradient with respect to all axes is an opportunity for a language of nature and intertwining materials, textures and experiences. This includes areas evolving from individual and group therapy spaces to a play area which in turn further opens up into a skill/crafts area, expressed in terms of the gradient axes, with the inside and the outside merging seamlessly together.