AGE REMIXED

02

Co-living Space of the Aged and the Young

China has long been benefitting from its demographic dividend. Among the emerging mega-cities from the 1980s, Shenzhen is always proud of being the youngest city in China. It is like a heterotopia of young people, the only purpose of people living here is to contribute to the overall development of the city.
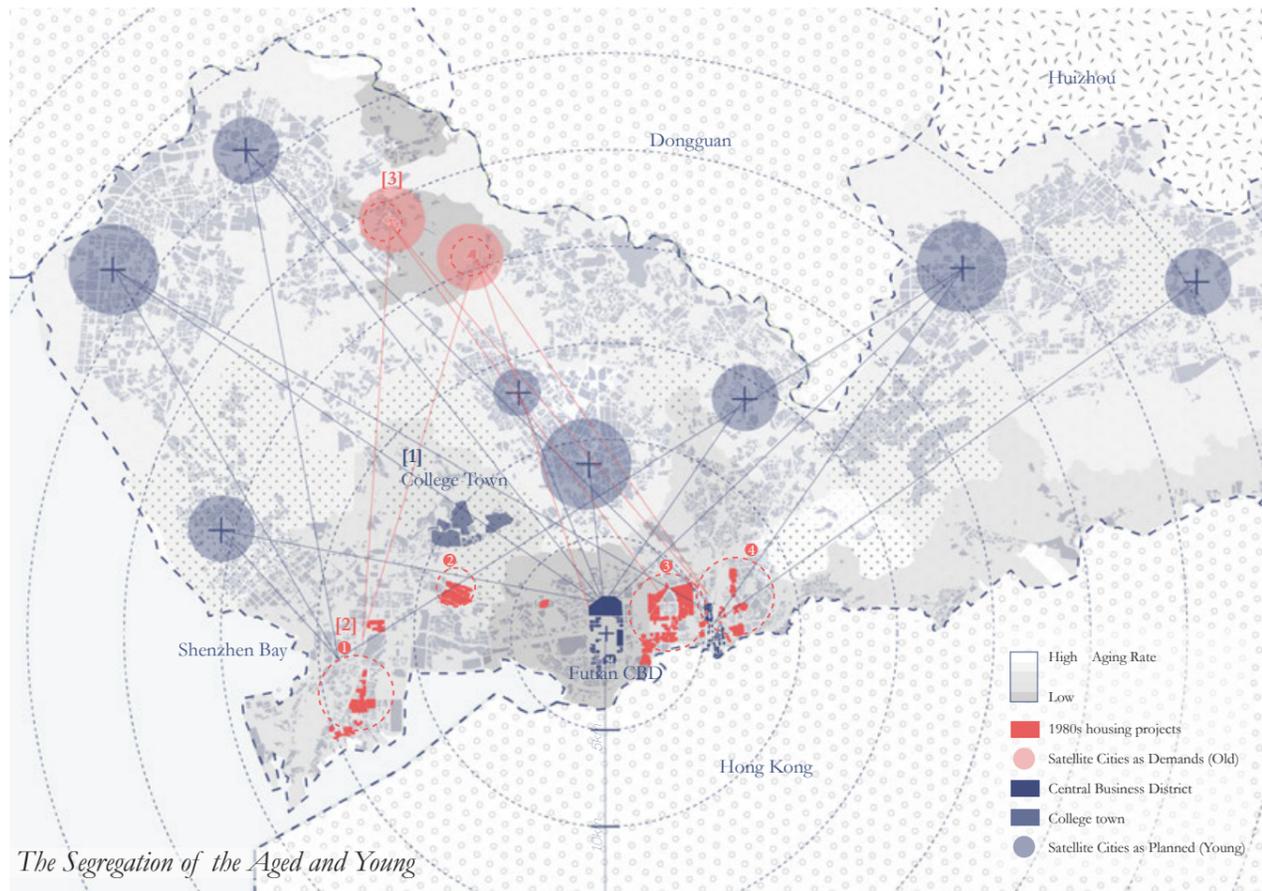
Unlike other mega-cities worldwide, Shenzhen does not have a complete and mature society of a life cycle. The Shenzhen city is young, but the generation of population boom is getting old. But Shenzhen is not ready.

The aged population are always kept away from the city vigor, voluntarily and involuntarily. They moved to community of the aged, cutting out connections to the changeful part of the city. It is always considered that the aged and young cannot live together because of different requirements. But this two age groups are originally supportive companions to the other.

Therefore, I want to propose a form for a co-living community for the aged and the young. They are not brutally juxtaposed to one another, but willingly choose to live together base on common interests.

Do not let them live in a heterotopia waiting for death.

The Segregation of the Aged and Young

High → Aging Rate
Low

■ 1980s housing projects
● Satellite Cities as Demands (Old)
■ Central Business District
■ College town
● Satellite Cities as Planned (Young)

Isolated Retirement Home

Aged people being gathered in retirement homes. There everyday life space is confined to a single building.

Suburbanized

Providing facilities for the aged, real estate companies build aged communities in suburban areas.

Old Residential Blocks

Dormitories constructed in the 1980s provided home for the population explosion. Now, people living here are mostly aged.

Shenzhen,
the youngest city in China

The Population Explosion in the 1980s

Shenzhen, the frontier of China's Reform and Opening-up in 1979, became the destination for people seeking more opportunities. In the twenty years after 1979, the population of Shenzhen increased by 1.1 million. [2]

Now, it's the explosion of the aged population

The first generation of immigrants are getting old, but the city is not ready. Comparing the other cities who has become a mature urban system of multi-generations, Shenzhen is apparently in short of necessary facilities for the aging society (see fig.1).
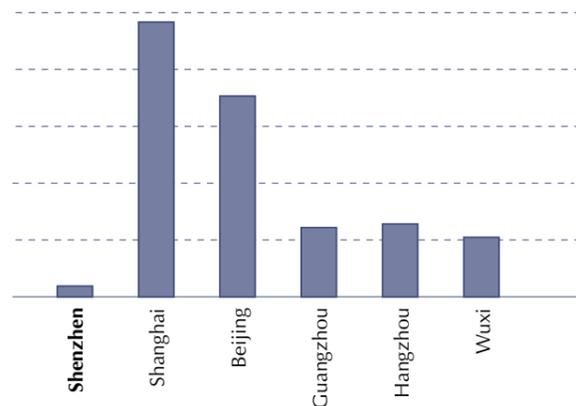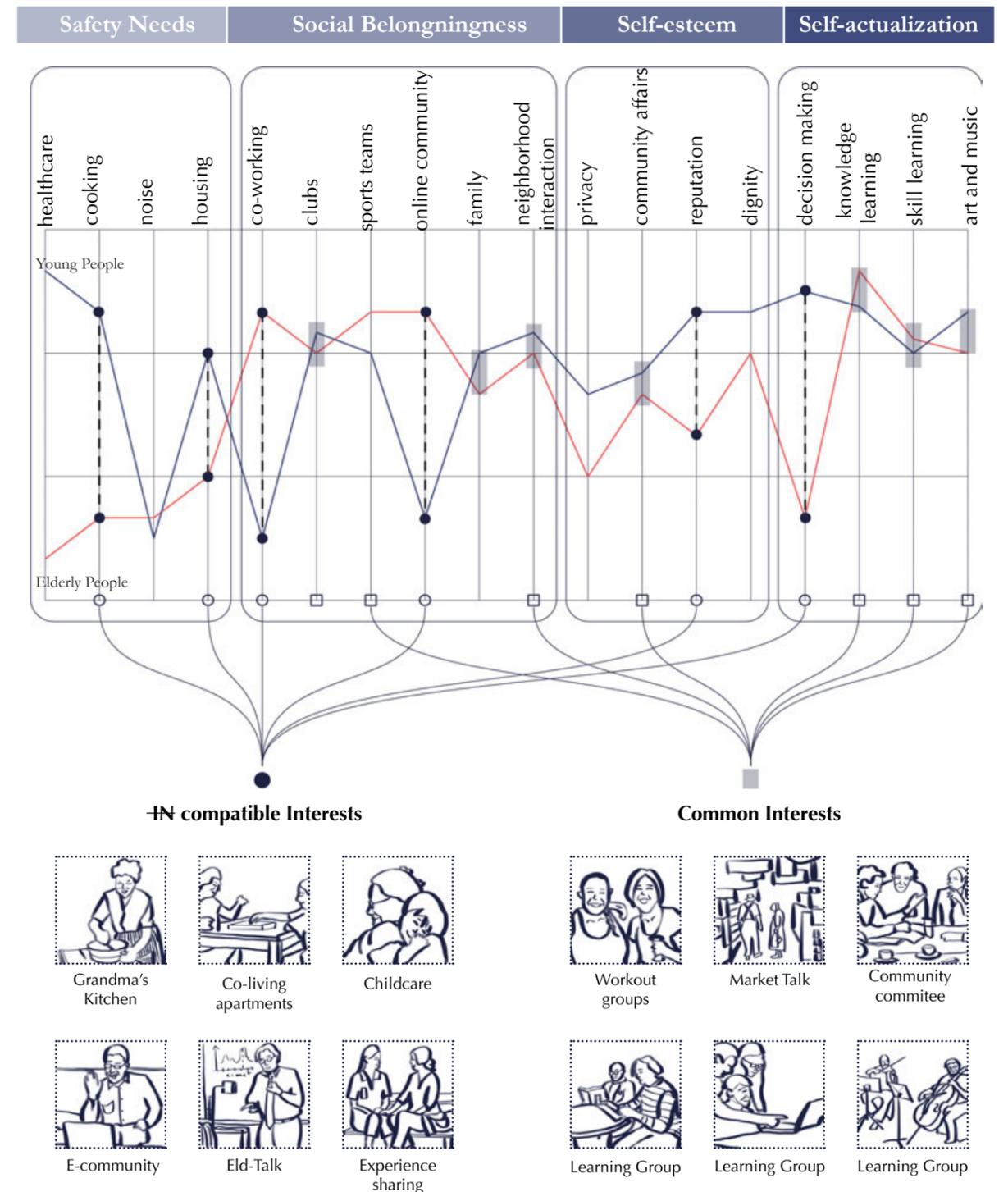

fig.1 Number of pension facilities in 6 major cities in China [3]

Safety Needs	Social Belongningness	Self-esteem	Self-actualization

IN compatible Interests

Grandma's Kitchen

Co-living apartments

Childcare

E-community

Eld-Talk

Experience sharing

Common Interests

Workout groups

Market Talk

Community commitee

Learning Group

Learning Group

Learning Group

The Metabolism of the City:
the aged moving out, the young move in

The aged are isolated from the city, they either move to the suburban commodity housings which provide sufficient supply of facilities for the aged, or going to a nursing home which is a single tower filled with the elderly. They are comfined to these places, like living in a heterotopia, in which the only thing for them to do is waiting for the end of their life. The aged are isolated from the vitality of city.

Co-living of the Aged and the Young

Due to different needs of living requirements and supporting facilities, the aged and young are always separated from each other. However, there are various conditions under which the aged and young can help each other, giving out assistance and companionship which their peer cannot provide.

Reactivate the 1980s Standardized Residential Blocks

From 1978, China began to turn from planned economy to market economy. However, in order to house thousands and millions of people flooding into Shenzhen, state-owned enterprises and public institutions were still providing apartments for employees, which means the housing units were offered as a welfare project from the government.[4] The ownership of the apartments belongs to the enterprises or institutions, **these apartments cannot be traded by individuals freely as commodity.**

These housing compounds were designed and planned under modernism principles, making them monotonous and homogeneous. But as the urban area of Shenzhen expanded to outer area, these housing compounds benefited a lot for its location advantage at the **city centre**.

As the residence reach retirement age, some of them move out to live elsewhere, some has vacant rooms as their children moved out. There leaves vacant rooms for young people who cannot afford high rent at the city centre. By implanting functional blocks, the housing compound can be redeveloped to become a co-living and co-working community, **transforming from a community of single generation to a mature urban system of multi-generations.**

1 Original photo of the cover image credit to Xiaobin
2 Data source: *Shenzhen Statistical Year Book 2016*
3 Urban Planning and Design Institute of Shenzhen, *Special Plan for Pension Facilities in Shenzhen (2011-2020)*
4 Fan Xianwei, *The evolution track of China's housing system and the establishment of long-term mechanism* [J]. Globalization, 2019 (08)
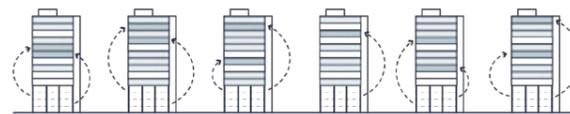
1 Collect population data

Investigating the vacancy rate, age distribution of the neighbourhood and the needs of the residents.
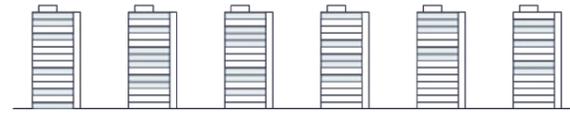
2 Free up lower level spaces

Relocate residents at the lower floors of buildings to higher floors. It will free up spaces above ground level and preparing for further development.
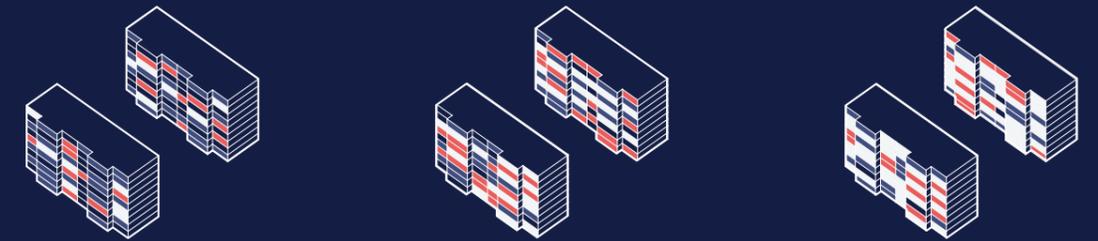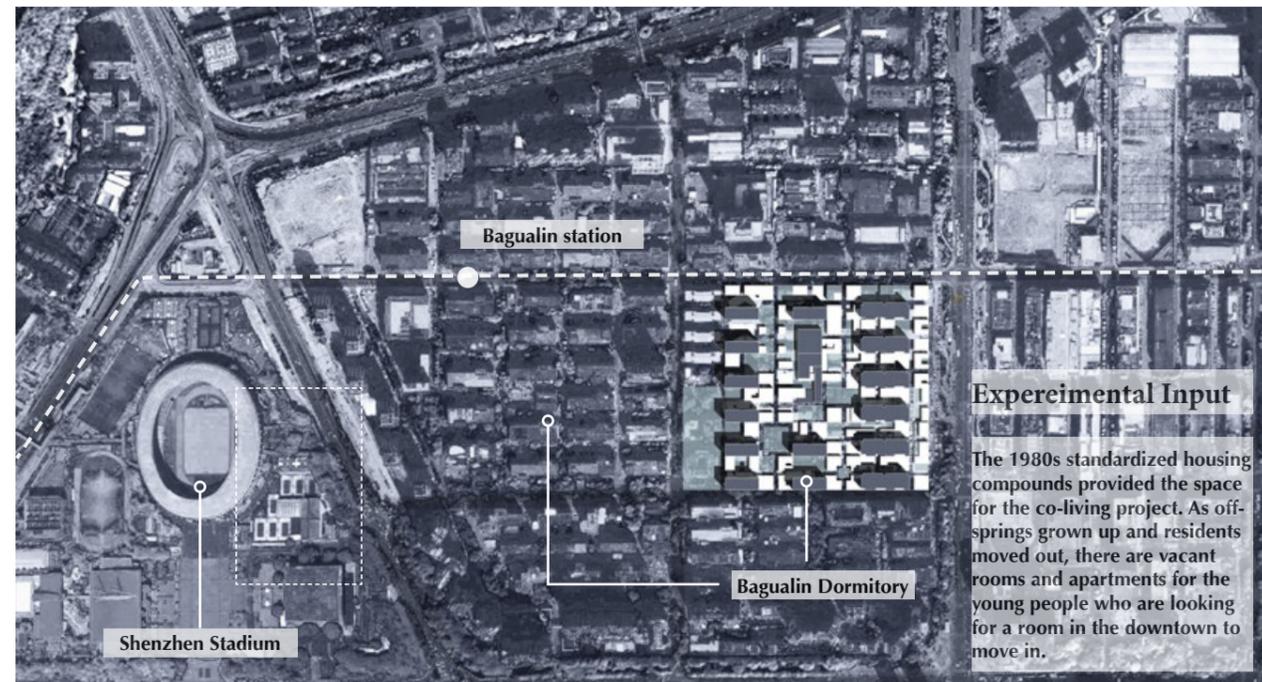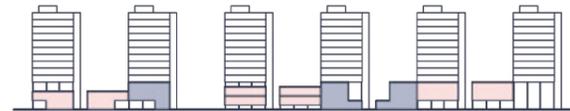

3 Insert functional units

Based on surveys and collected population data, functional units will be inserted to meet up with the needs of old and new residents, the aged and the young.
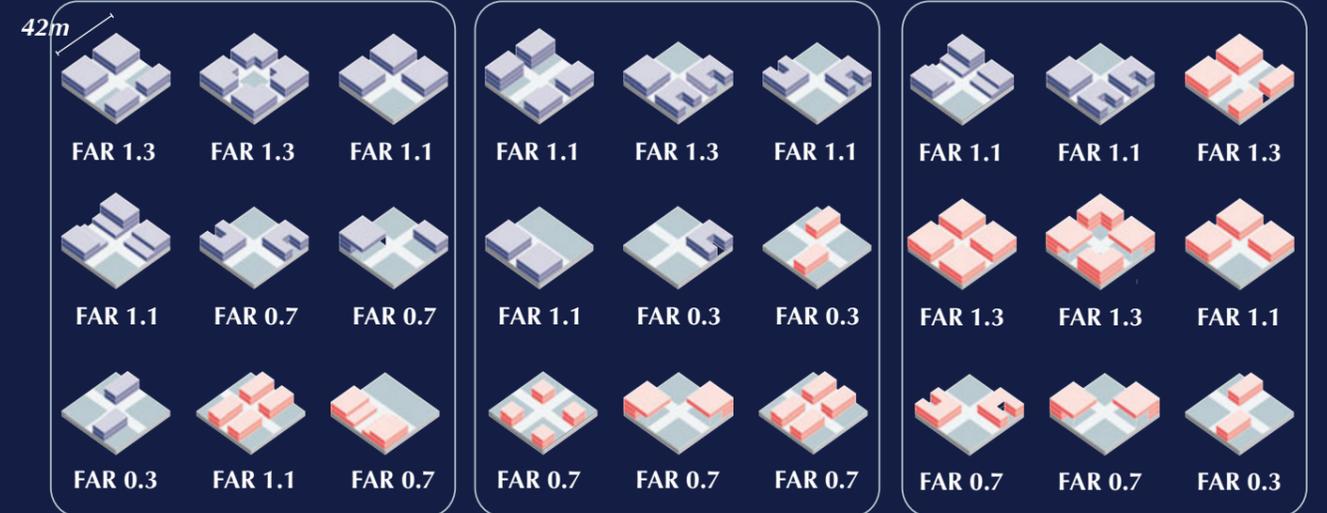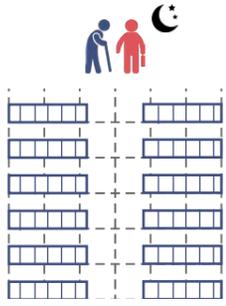

4 Create space for interaction

To increase communication and mutual help between the aged and the young, physical spaces for interactions will be created along the edges, such as courtyards and staggered floor.
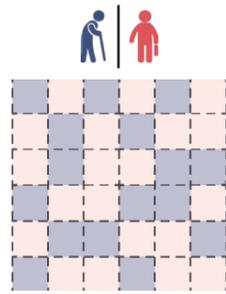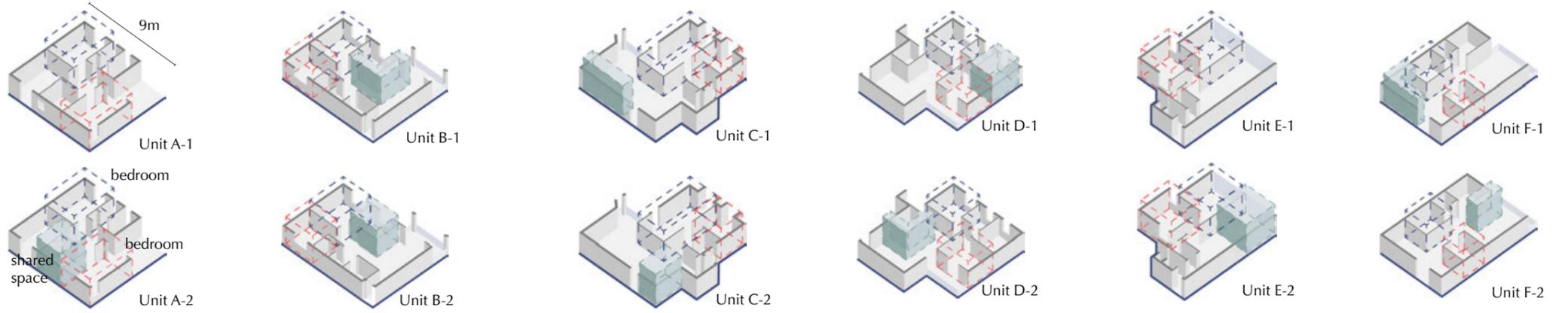

Bagualin station

Shenzhen Stadium

Bagualin Dormitory

Expereimental Input

The 1980s standardized housing compounds provided the space for the co-living project. As offsprings grown up and residents moved out, there are vacant rooms and apartments for the young people who are looking for a room in the downtown to move in.

Low   **population density**   High
age ratio (young : old)

42m

FAR 1.3	FAR 1.3	FAR 1.1		FAR 1.1	FAR 1.3	FAR 1.1		FAR 1.1	FAR 1.1	FAR 1.3
FAR 1.1	FAR 0.7	FAR 0.7		FAR 1.1	FAR 0.3	FAR 0.3		FAR 1.3	FAR 1.3	FAR 1.1
FAR 0.3	FAR 1.1	FAR 0.7		FAR 0.7	FAR 0.7	FAR 0.7		FAR 0.7	FAR 0.7	FAR 0.3

120m

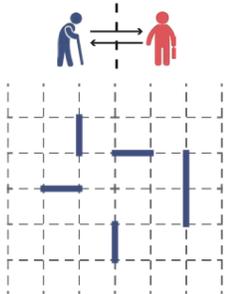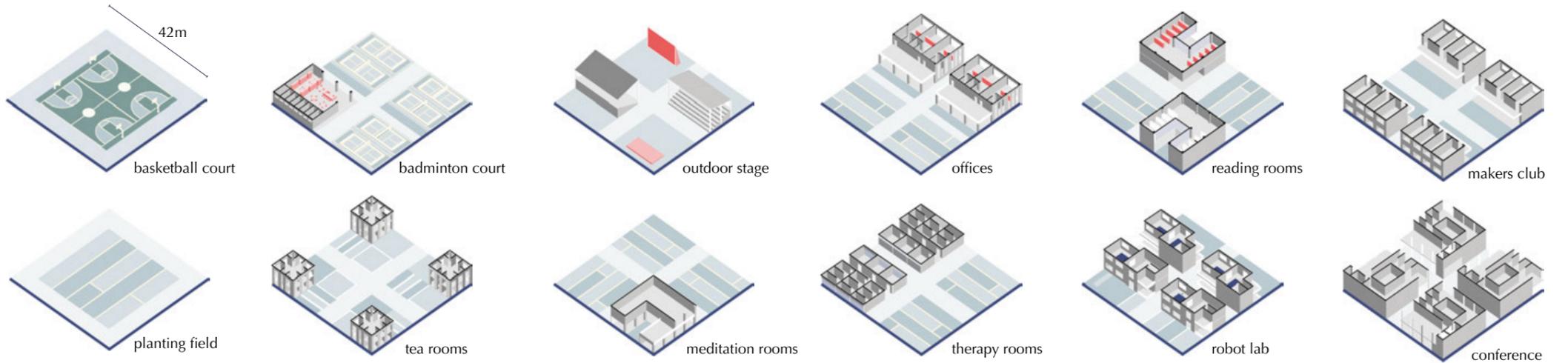| population: 250 age ratio: 25/100 | FAR: 1.03 | | population: 300 age ratio: 50/100 | FAR: 1.15 | | population: 360 age ratio: 75/100 | FAR: 1.30 |

240m

Apartments

Vacant rooms and apartments of the elderly residents can be rented to young people. To decrease rent, the young can help the aged by helping them with some housework. The aged can also help the young by giving them life guidance, cook for them and do some childcare. A new kind of stem family is to be created.
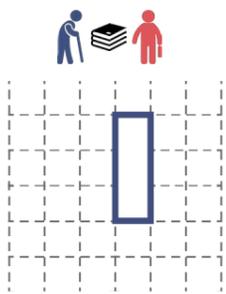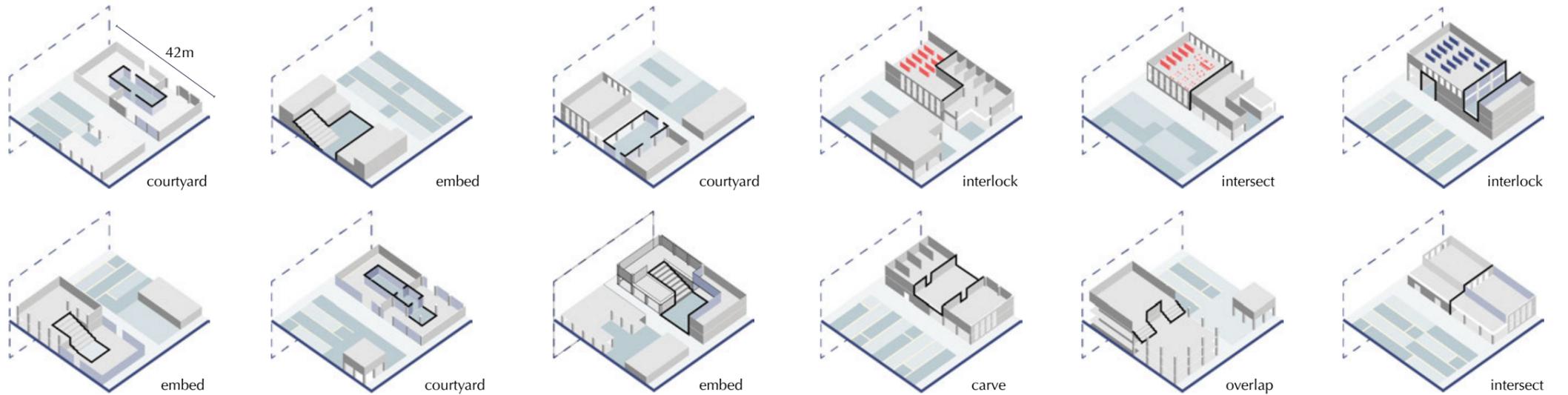
9m

Unit A-1

bedroom

bedroom

shared space

Unit A-2

Unit B-1

Unit B-2

Unit C-1

Unit C-2

Unit D-1

Unit D-2

Unit E-1

Unit E-2

Unit F-1

Unit F-2

Grid

Different age groups have different needs. Co-living does not mean doing everything together, satisfying the basic needs of both age groups require different room types and density. Different type of functional units allows various activities to happen at the same time and at different times.

42m

basketball court

planting field

badminton court

tea rooms

outdoor stage

meditation rooms

offices

therapy rooms

reading rooms

robot lab

makers club

conference

Edge

Unexpected interactions happen here. Three types of interaction spaces are proposed: courtyard, interface and staggered floors. This create physical contact or eye contact for the two different age groups to have a glance on one another. This is the place for mutual help and surprises to take place.

42m

courtyard

embed

embed

courtyard

courtyard

embed

interlock

carve

intersect

overlap

interlock

intersect

Critical Mass

Activities of common interests happen here. People at all age have the need of self-improvement. The aged and the young can help each other physically and mentally, improving their body and also their minds.

126m

swimming pool

gym and tracks

market space

lecture hall
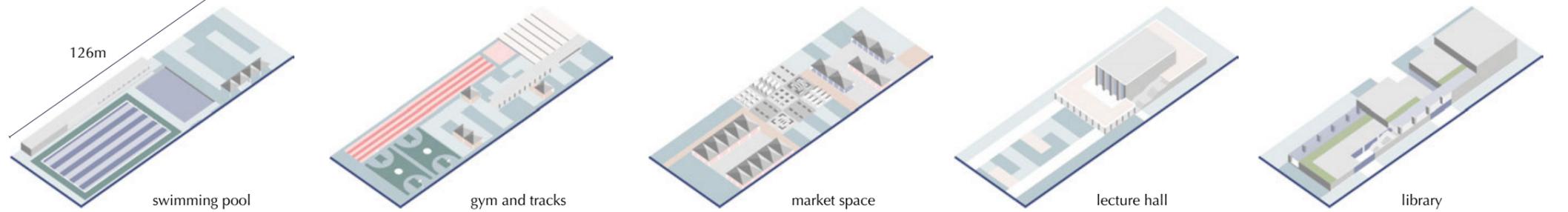
library

42m

1   library
2   robot lab
3   conference room
4   e-commerce center
5   therapy room
6   common playground
7   public kitchen
8   childcare courtyard
9   education center
10 tea house
11 cafe and bar

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  5   20
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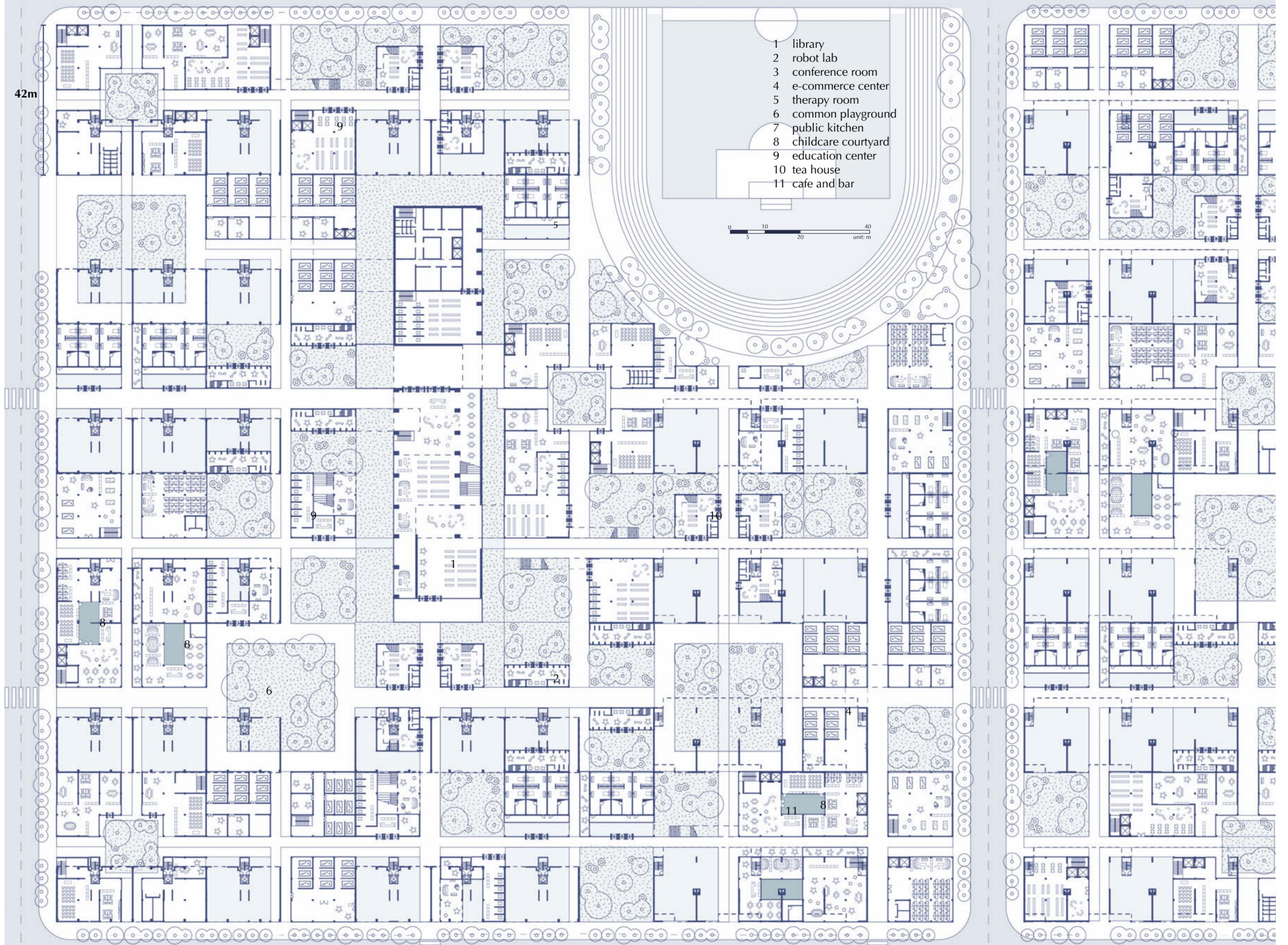
Apartment: Shared Family Space

The aged and young can help each other as a household. Young people can help with some physical work, the aged will pass life experiences to the young, the young can help the aged with electronic devices.

Grid: Seperated Activities

Functional blocks located in the grids can satisfy different needs of the aged and the young. Incompatible activities will happen here without disturbing others. The specific function and quantity of blocks are based on the survey among the community.
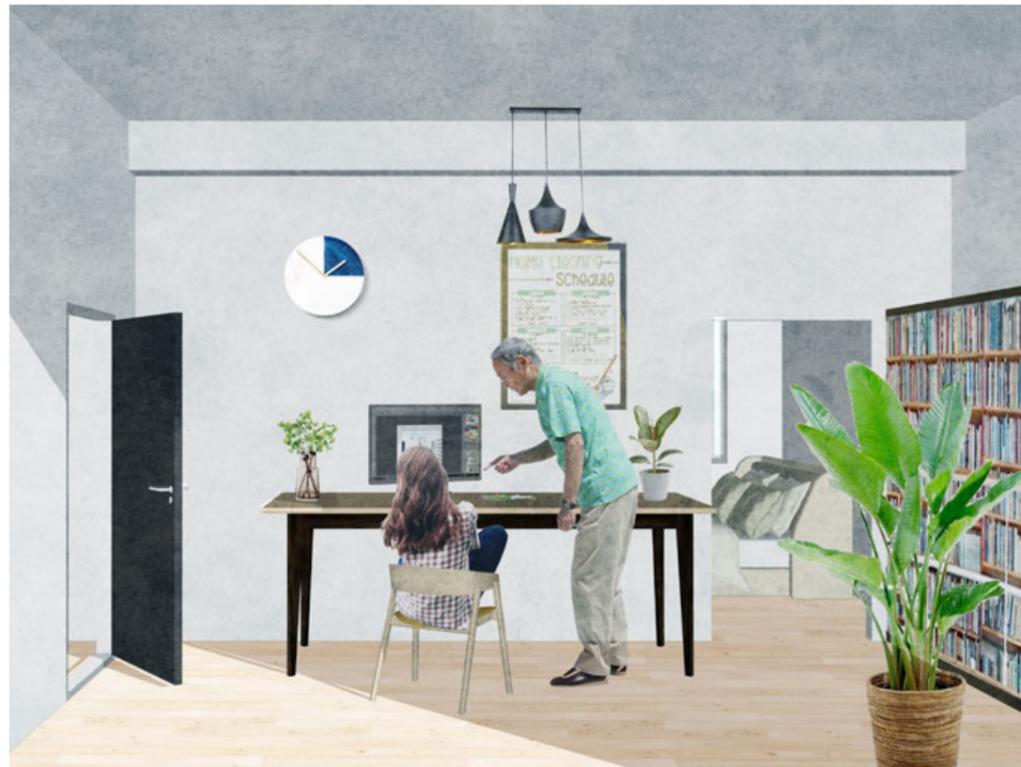
Edges: From Incompatible To Mutual Help

To free the aged from the separated condition, it is necessary to establish physical, visual and social connections. For example, the aged can help young parents take care of children.

Critical Mass: Common Interests

Facilities like library, swimming pool are for the common interests of the aged and the young. These facilities can satisfy the needs of both age groups and also providing places for communication and mutual help.