

Collaborative I-Docs Beyond the Screens: Face-to-Face Participation Processes in Interactive Non-Fiction

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This research aims to evaluate the face-to-face participation processes included in the design of collaborative interactive documentaries. The transmedia expansion of these initiatives favors a hybrid approach that keeps the online perspective but also reclaims the link between creative collaboration and territory, thus generating collective processes with the participants. This article presents an analysis of four projects developed in both physical and virtual spaces. We apply an original characterization model to each of the initiatives to draw conclusions about face-to-face participation, its different formulas depending on the creative approach, and the influence that onsite participation has on the results. We detected a series of productive connections that occur because of the spatial conception of the initiatives and that have consequences for the development of the works, either increasing the participants' involvement or improving the collaboration results.

Keywords: interactive documentary, co-creation, face-to-face participation, transmedia, collaborative i-doc, community building

The present research studies interactive documentaries, also known as i-docs. Aston, Gaudenzi, and Rose (2017) define this concept broadly as any non-fiction practice that incorporates digital interactive technology. Similarly, for Nash (2021), it is an experimental area that combines documentary with digital technology. For Gifreu-Castells (2013), interactive non-fiction is a narrative modulated through interactivity and user action. For this author, interactive documentaries integrate the mechanisms of conventional documentaries into what he calls navigation and interaction modes. The terms "interactive documentary" and "i-doc" are used interchangeably, and although there are other abbreviations, we have used i-doc because of its breadth and so as not to limit ourselves to the use of a particular platform (Aston & Gaudenzi, 2012).

Several researchers have highlighted the social potential of the i-doc format (Miller & Allor, 2016; Rose, 2017) and its capacity to construct plural discourses (Odorico, 2015). Aston and Odorico (2018) applied the notion of polyphony to interactive documentaries, making it possible to integrate voices, aesthetics, and

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narratives. In this sense, the interactive documentary has a collaborative side through which the audience can contribute beyond simply interacting with the content (Nash, 2012). Although the design of the collaborative i-doc is usually limited to the virtual environment, this article highlights a series of works that propose a hybrid model of participation so that people can participate both virtually and in person. This collaborative intervention in the public space connects with the tradition of the different modalities of collaborative audiovisual creation that, throughout their history, have aimed to have a social impact. The concept of collaborative creation corresponds to a production mode that incorporates participants who have some control and influence over the creative content. The origin of this practice in different spheres has resulted in it being referred to in various ways (Villaplana-Ruiz, 2016), so that terms that apply to practices with a common foundation coexist, despite certain methodological, contextual, and disciplinary differences. The *Newfoundland Project* (Kemeny & Low, 1967) of the Challenge for Change program (National Film Board of Canada), better known as the *Fogo Island* project, is considered a pioneering case. Similar proposals have been made in ethnographic cinema (Elder, 1995) and participatory video (Roberts & Lurch, 2015).

The range of collaboration formulas has expanded with the emergence of digital communication (Pack, 2012). Mandy Rose (2011) classified collaborative documentaries in digital culture into four types, among which we highlight "The Community of Purpose" (para. 5). In this type, participants share a social objective, which increases the relevance of the process as opposed to the product. On the other hand, participatory culture leads to an increase in collaborative initiatives, which are combined with forms of engagement in digital culture. Dovey and Rose (2013) highlighted how the creators of collaborative projects benefit from the interaction of online communities.

New debates on the possibility of *meaningful participation* have also arisen (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013), complemented by assessments of the social perspective on this type of production. According to Gaudenzi (2014), collaboration should involve a certain degree of control over the initiative. Nash (2021) highlights that participation is related to the power relations between the different actors, which, for this author, are not sufficiently modified in collaborative documentaries. For Roig Telo (2017), it is necessary to have collective decision making and spaces for deliberation.

It is worth noting that digital communication has modified collaborative production because when relationships become virtual, the exchange between participants and the logic of participation itself changes. If we evaluate the aforementioned *Fogo Island* (Kemeny & Low, 1967) project, we see that its meaning was linked to the representation of the inhabitants of that island and to a series of conflicts that only existed in the materiality of that geographic space they inhabited (Waugh, Brendan Baker, & Winton, 2010). The workers' claims in the collaborative documentary *O Todos o Ninguno* [All or none] (Colectivo Cine de Clase, 1976) relied on the factory spaces and the streets where the workers who participated in the strike came together. For participatory video, authors have reflected on the importance of interacting with the community in the territory and the ability of this tool to promote local actions (Lurch & Lurch, 2006; Shaw & Robertson, 1997). Although one of the main allies of collaborative audiovisual creation is the Internet, it conditions how the actions in the local field are carried out, how the people who inhabit the physical space where conflicts occur are contacted, and how the demands and claims of the participating communities are originated.

It has been shown that the non-linearity and interactivity of i-docs both have a positive impact on user involvement (Vázquez-Herrero, 2021); however, authors have also warned of the limitations of a communication

secluded in the virtual, and that it is beneficial to design a multifaceted strategy that includes face-to-face action (Canella, 2017). Vázquez-Herrero and Moreno (2017) stated that this connection between the virtual and the physical "is one of the pillars that make change possible, a link between documentary work and action in the field" (p. 127). Aston (2017) pointed out the relevance of the physical context for understanding interactive documentaries. This author's concept of "emplaced interaction" alludes to interaction in a space shared by the audience, the creators, and the subjects filmed to achieve a joint construction of meaning. Likewise, some authors have indicated that the i-doc is an opportunity to convey narratives focused on the local (Obando-Arroyave, 2021), while others have highlighted its link with the community and the territory (Vázquez-Herrero, Benito, & Revello-Mouriz, 2021).

Collaborative i-docs that are developed in both physical and virtual spaces can keep the community construction linked to a place, which is important for connecting broader collective processes. Zimmermann and De Michiel (2017) contributed to the concept of "open space documentary" (p. 1), which refers to collaborative practices characterized by exchange and mobility between analog and digital media in a search for participatory encounters. Zimmermann (2019) also stated that participatory documentary in the new media functions as a "permeable media," reaching different platforms and activating social commitment. These notions are close to those of transmedia documentary, which, among all its possible expressions, has a modality of territorial navigation that "manages to involve participants in not only virtual but also territorial environments" (Renó, 2014, p. 143). Participation in the field, beyond screens, occurs through an expansion of interactive initiatives that is outside the audiovisual. This expansion is generated with a transmedia design, which opens up various avenues for interaction and, in some cases, the dynamics of collaborative creation. Some authors have reviewed the link between collaborative creation and transmedia storytelling (Alberich-Pascual & Gómez-Pérez, 2016), while the interactive documentary has been described as a relevant transmedia format in the field of non-fiction (Sánchez-Mesa, Aarseth, Pratten, & Scolari, 2016).

Objectives and Methodology

The object of study of this research is collaborative i-docs based on a transmedia design that has a hybrid approach to participation; that is, participation is both physical and virtual. The research has two objectives:

1. Characterize this interactive production mode in relation to its spatial and territorial aspects.
2. Evaluate how this face-to-face participation occurs in a series of collaborative i-docs and what influence it has on their results.

This article focuses on the Latin American and Spanish contexts, with case studies produced in Argentina, Spain, and Peru. The emergence of numerous interactive documentary proposals in Latin America in recent years, their current validity, and the volume of significant productions justify and prompt a study and analysis of initiatives in Latin American countries. Gifreu-Castells (2017) highlighted the potential of Latin American interactive documentaries. Latin America also has a large collaborative audiovisual tradition (Gumucio Dagron, 2001), and there have also been relevant collaborative creation experiences in Spain, as well as significant development of interactive documentaries. The four recent cases, *Proyecto Quipu* [Quipu Project] (Court, Lerner, Melo, & Tabares-Duque, 2013–2015), *(Des)iguales* [(Un)Equal] (Moreno & Irigaray, 2015–

2017), *HEBE* (Jiménez & Salvadó, 2017), and *Barnacas* (Dhooge, 2017), were selected based on a previous analysis that identified the particular importance given to face-to-face participation and physical space in these four productions, which is in line with the object of study. This analysis consisted of identifying and evaluating a broad set of i-docs and transmedia documentaries in reference repositories, such as Docubase of the MIT Open Documentary Lab and InterDOC, and in research on the subject (Alberich-Pascual & Gómez-Pérez, 2016; Aston et al., 2017; Nash, 2021, among others)—to identify cases that met the following criteria:

- A. Collaborative cases from Ibero-America. They needed to include significant participatory dynamics (Jenkins et al., 2013) that contributed to the initiative and were not just interactions in the i-doc.
- B. Hybrid perspective with a notable component of face-to-face communication. They had to expand the narrative beyond the virtual platform. As the transmedia design favored the multiplicity of platforms, the physical space needed to be one of these platforms.
- C. Collaboration in their face-to-face aspect. One face-to-face approach was not enough; it also had to be participatory, with the significance that interaction with space had in collaborative creation and the i-doc.
- D. Explicit relevance given to the territory. This was appropriate for going deeper into the issue of physical space so that there was a greater connection between subject, participation, and territory.

In the initial stage, these parameters were identified in each selected case, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Selection of Case Studies According to the Established Criteria.

	Collaborative Approach	Hybrid Perspective	Face-to-Face Participation	Relevance to the Physical Space
<i>Proyecto Quipu</i>	The participants are the women whose stories are the focus of the initiative.	Meetings with participants, workshops, exhibitions, etc.	Participation is in person, although this is later reflected in the virtual platform.	The place where the women live is essential to the i-doc.
<i>(Des)Iguales</i>	The participants are people at any location in Latin America.	Actions in the street.	Participation in physical spaces after a virtual participation stage.	The streets as a space for collective action.
<i>HEBE</i>	The participants are the six people who star in the i-doc.	In-person communication, meetings, etc.	Creation spaces and discussion with participants.	Production of content in relation to everyday space.
<i>Barnacas</i>	The participants are people who are related to or interested in the neighborhood.	Guided tours, workshops, etc.	Participation in the neighborhood.	The neighborhood as the center of the narrative.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

We used a qualitative methodology based on a multiple case study, which allowed us to contrast the different cases and approach the object of study in all its complexities (Yin, 2018). Schoch (2020) stated that in

multiple case studies, four cases are optimal for an in-depth evaluation, and it is appropriate to use intentional sampling. Thus, we used the intentional sampling of key informants through in-depth interviews with experts to obtain the data. We interviewed the professionals responsible for each case study. The interviews were semi-structured, with flexible questions that made it possible to address other issues. The interviews lasted between 50 and 100 minutes and were recorded so that they could be transcribed and analyzed. We obtained prior approval from the interviewees, who also signed an informed consent document so that we could analyze and quote their responses in the research. The questions were developed based on a bibliographic review of collaborative audiovisual modes, focusing on the key concepts of the object of study—that is, space and participation. The interview guide is available in the Appendix.

The characterization model (Table 2) was designed based on the bibliographic review. After analyzing the data from the interviews, the model was applied to each case study. This resulted in new information and more material for analysis thanks to contrasting the four cases. The model is divided into two variables: face-to-face participation and physical space, which, in turn, generate two categories. The first variable corresponds to the community's contributions, including the specific activities that were carried out and the role participants played, and their interactions, which refers to how the collaboration generated social encounters.

The second variable included territoriality and interventions. With territoriality, we are not only referring to the geographical place but also to the space signified by the symbolic dimension of certain coordinates, and to a process marked by the social and power relations that occur in a specific place (Orihuela, 2019). We refer to the territorial conditions that influence the collaborative initiative or its participants. If the first category can be understood as how the space modifies the project, the second category, interventions, corresponds to how the project modifies the space.

Table 2. Analysis Model of Face-to-Face Processes in Collaborative I-Docs.

Variable	Categories	Indicators
A. Face-to-face participation.	A.1. Contributions.	A.1. Specific activities and contributions, such as content creation or contribution of information.
	A.2. Interactions.	A.2. Relationship between participants, relationship with the team, dialogues.
B. Physical space.	B.1. Territoriality.	B.1. Conditions of the space, the link between the treated subject and the space, influence of the space on the project design.
	B.2. Interventions.	B.2. The actions of participants and the team in the space, appropriation of the space.

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Results

The results are presented in relation to the variables in Table 2. First, face-to-face participation was determined in each case according to the indicators related to categories A.1. and A.2. Second, physical space is defined through territoriality and intervention indicators. Then, the results of the case study, based on the information and analysis obtained from the interviews, were used to determine the achievements and limitations of this hybrid model.

Interactive Documentaries and Face-to-Face Participation

Proyecto Quipu (Court et al., 2013–2015) is a transmedia work that spanned several years from when Rosemarie Lerner, one of its authors along with María Court, began in 2011 to imagine a documentary condemning the forced sterilizations in Peru during the government of Fujimori in the 1990s. As this subject is not from the past, since the people who suffered this are still seeking justice, the authors wanted to use the participatory possibilities of the new media to tell the story.

The project established a telephone line so that any victim who wished could explain their experiences, and their contributions were the main part of the interactive documentary. Its main face-to-face activity was workshops. According to the authors, these workshops began with explaining the importance of storytelling and then proceeded to describe the *Proyecto Quipu* (Court et al., 2013–2015) and its objectives. They then explained how the telephone line worked and how it could be used to record testimony. This was done in the same workshop session.

Other face-to-face activities were also organized, including an exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Cerrillo. This was participatory, since people who attended the exhibition could leave their messages at the end of the experience. In addition, a workshop was held at the Museum of Memory, where actual physical quipus (a traditional Peruvian tool made with a system of knots) was made and some testimonies were heard.

The *(Des)iguales* project (Moreno & Irigaray, 2015–2017) is a documentary by the Latin American Chair of Transmedia Narratives of which Irigaray is the executive director. The author says about *(Des)iguales* that they wanted to do something that would unite all of Latin America. Inequalities of different kinds would thus form the theme of this project that included “the territory as a transversal platform, and the cities as part of that platform: there is the mobile platform, including television and newspaper, and there is the territory-city platform” (personal communication, September 14, 2021). According to Irigaray, this suggests “expanded territoriality.” The aim was for users to see “how the map vibrated from Tierra del Fuego to Tijuana” (personal communication, September 14, 2021).

The first stage of *(Des)iguales* (Moreno & Irigaray, 2015–2017) was completely online. It involved users contributing short videos that were uploaded to the online platform, georeferenced and located on the virtual map. This collaboration yielded approximately 60 videos, which were used to define 10 categories of inequality. Then, a remix video was made for each category. This video was viewed with augmented reality through an image that users had to print and place in different spaces. Therefore, onsite participation comprised, on one hand, taking the image and associating it with a certain place in the city, and, on the other hand, interacting with that content and recording it to generate new material, which is also geolocated. According to Irigaray, this constituted a “production loop” or “spiral” (personal communication, September 14, 2021). The somewhat experimental nature of the project, which aimed to see how far the collaboration would go, led to *(Des)iguales* being discontinued when it was in this face-to-face stage, although some contributions were still made. The next stage required deepening the experience by projecting the videos on façades and walls of different locations.

The next case is *HEBE* (Jiménez & Salvadó, 2017), a research project on youth empowerment led by the University of Girona (Spain). The webdoc *HEBE* is also called *Huellas Digitales* [digital footprints]. To start the production, the team selected six young people with diverse profiles who did not know each other. These participants received active training in narrative issues, audiovisual equipment, and aesthetics notions. Afterward, the team gave the camera to the young people and worked with them on footage that would make the interactive documentary.

The recordings were structured around three themes, which the project team defined based on previous research on empowerment. In that study, they concluded that empowerment is approached from three aspects: moments, processes, and spaces. "If you have to talk about your empowerment, there are key moments, longer processes that you have experienced and also places that have empowered you," explains Jiménez (personal communication, October 15, 2021). However, they found it difficult to communicate a process or a moment in three minutes using audiovisual means, so they changed these first two aspects to two other elements that would communicate the same: a representation of the participant and a representation of the person who had empowered them. The third aspect, the idea of space, gained more relevance because "it opens up to other perspectives, that is, space can convey moments and processes," says Jiménez (personal communication, October 15, 2021).

All of these were complemented by several focus group sessions. Finally, the last session was organized in which all the pieces were shown, and each participant could reflect and comment on them. The young people accompanied the project team to presentations, conferences, and other spaces where people ask them about their participation process. The project also had other face-to-face activities, such as youth empowerment debates, during which conclusions were reached with the assistance of other young people, pedagogues, and empowerment policy makers.

The fourth case study explored a historical area in Barcelona. When a friend told documentary filmmaker Oscar Dhooge about his childhood, he discovered that a shantytown existed in the Horta-Guinardó district of Barcelona. Dhooge's interest in historical memory gave rise to *Barnacas* (2017), a multiphase work that began in 2013 and took on a transmedia approach in 2017. At this stage, the narrative focused on the lives of the children who were born in the shantytown of Francisco Alegre at the end of Franco's dictatorship and its transition to democracy.

Together with journalist Jesús Martínez, co-author of *Barnacas*, Dhooge (2017) formulated the project with a social perspective and the aim of recovering historical memory. *Barnacas* was constructed largely based on the participants' testimonies. In some cases, the participants even contacted the documentary maker through social networks so that he could come to their homes and hear their personal stories. These meetings provided him with graphic and visual documentation, which was later added to the project.

Barnacas (Dhooge, 2017) expanded into various media, including an illustrated book and a short film. It incorporated face-to-face activities, including guided tours through the shantytown area. These were organized in collaboration with the Barcelona History Museum. The tour guide, Isidoro Martínez, who was born in that area, was one of the protagonists of the project. People who had lived in the shantytown and other interested parties attended the tours. During these tours, the people shared information, which led to

conversations and debates among attendees. *Barnacas* had other activities with a similar function, including workshops and talks in schools, although they were less participatory.

Having described the face-to-face activities, we wish to show what each author wants to achieve through their hybrid participation formula. In *Proyecto Quipu*, Court et al. (2013–2015) sought a collective voice: “It was very important that they tell us their own stories in their own words and that these could not be misrepresented, edited, or mediated” (personal communication, October 13, 2021). Dhooge, for *Barnacas* (2017), explains a similar motivation when he says that “in works that deal with historical memory, the people are the voice; it would be a great mistake to eliminate the participatory element” (personal communication, October 8, 2021). His transmedia perspective allows the project to remain current, have a longer journey, and perhaps have a greater impact. The director of *(Des)iguales* (Moreno & Irigaray, 2015–2017) stated that he wanted to see how far a project could expand through collaboration. Finally, Jiménez explains that no other alternative was proposed for *HEBE* (Jiménez & Salvadó, 2017):

We imagined a very experiential workshop where they could contact and create non-formal learning spaces (. . .) We gave them a camera and told them “now you can portray this person and this person can portray you.” And, of course, that can also be done virtually, but what a physical space offers was of great interest to us. (personal communication, October 15, 2021)

Thus, face-to-face participation generates interactions that change the approach of initiatives. *Proyecto Quipu* (Court et al., 2013–2015), *Barnacas* (Dhooge, 2017), and *HEBE* (Jiménez & Salvadó, 2017) are based on participation with the team in a shared space, although in *HEBE* the filming was an individual task that each young person had to do in their own space. Face-to-face meetings are effective in facilitating greater interaction because of the relationship created between participants, an aspect that all the authors mention, except for Irigaray. *(Des)iguales* (Moreno & Irigaray, 2015–2017) was aimed at users who were only connected through the Internet and who contributed their collaboration individually; therefore, interactions between participants were limited. The authors of the first three initiatives highlighted the relationships created between the participants. In some cases, these relationships are still maintained.

Territory of Participation and Intervention in the Space

Some spaces challenge a community or are linked to collective processes that activate a certain group. This connection between the participants and the territory can be seen in *Proyecto Quipu* (Court et al., 2013–2015) and *Barnacas* (Dhooge, 2017). First, the workshops occurred in different locations in Peru (Huancabamba, Piura, Cusco, Lima, and Pucallpa), both in the women’s homes and in other meeting places within these areas. In *Barnacas* (Dhooge, 2017), the tours were made in the area where the project was based, as the tour guide and many of the people who attended the tours had lived in the shantytown.

This connection between participants and territory is absent in *(Des)iguales* (Moreno & Irigaray, 2015–2017) and *HEBE* (Jiménez & Salvadó, 2017). In the first case, people from all over Latin America could participate from any location. Although there was a link between the participant and the territory, it was impossible to obtain the same collective response that could be obtained in a smaller area, as the space was wide and the group varied. In *HEBE*, the meetings occurred in a neutral room at the university, established by a team with no relationship to any of the young people. Moreover, the space utilized by each

participant was diverse, corresponding to their personal environment. Jiménez explains that they decided that the young people's activities would refer to their personal spaces so that they "would talk about their spaces in the first person and we would not go there to colonize a space that was not ours" (personal communication, October 15, 2021).

Both *Proyecto Quipu* (Court et al., 2013–2015) and *Barnacas* (Dhooge, 2017) could count on initial interest from potential participants, while *HEBE* (Jiménez & Salvadó, 2017) and *(Des)iguales* (Moreno & Irigaray, 2015–2017) tried to create a community from scratch. The authors of the first two cases agreed on the ease with which they got people interested in actively participating in face-to-face activities or found people willing to provide information. After a radio announcement to convene the first *Proyecto Quipu* workshop, more than 30 women who wanted to participate in the project arrived the next day. In some cases, they had traveled from far away.

It is difficult to consider the issue being addressed by *Proyecto Quipu* (Court et al., 2013–2015) without contemplating where the conflict occurs. The authors understood this. Lerner says that the lawyer Giulia Tamayo, who worked in defense of the women, spoke to them of forced sterilizations as "a situated experience" (personal communication, October 13, 2021), which was different for women depending on whether they came from the coastal regions, the mountains, or the jungle. Lerner says that although this did not change the approach of the workshops in the different regions, it was important to know the particularities of the conflict and how it varied depending on the space in which it occurred.

Knowledge of the singularities of the territory is necessary to design face-to-face initiatives. Thus, in *Barnacas* (Dhooge, 2017), three nodes were created within the district to provide alternatives for older attendees or participants. They, therefore, did not have to go on the tour, since the area was steep, and they could go to the library instead. In *(Des)iguales* (Moreno & Irigaray, 2015–2017), they knew that the legislation on putting up posters or projecting content in public areas varied depending on the country, so they gave the possibility of the images being pasted on the walls of university campuses. *(Des)iguales* also shows how the project was structured in relation to knowledge of the territory. Irigaray expressed that to fully understand the initiative, "you have to understand Latin America. Our practices are in the street. It has to do with this idea of going out, of expression in the territory" (personal communication, September 14, 2021).

This is similar to *Proyecto Quipu* (Court et al., 2013–2015). According to Lerner, the mode of collaboration that this project establishes "is inspired by the way in which these women organize themselves," using "a community network system that they already have" (personal communication, October 13, 2021). The team could attend the women's meetings, which were held once a month. Women from different places attended these meetings, and they spread the word about the initiative in their respective localities, encouraging other women to participate. Lerner and Court also visited provinces or towns where women awaited them with new participants for the project.

The analysis of the different cases shows that there is no single possible relationship with space in collaborative work; rather, this is to be defined considering a series of factors that cannot be ignored. This shows that territory affects the conception of an interactive project. However, the converse is also true. The collaborative i-doc also modifies or aims to modify that space.

Therefore, there are interventions and appropriation processes in the spaces. The *Proyecto Quipu* (Court et al., 2013–2015) workshops included an activism plan to go out on the streets with the participants, fill the villages with posters and claim their rights. In *HEBE* (Jiménez & Salvadó, 2017) the activities rotated around the idea of empowerment spaces and, according to Jiménez, making a space your own. Jiménez explains that the reflection that each young person had to creatively formulate their personal space, together with a comparison of the other young people's experiences, thanks to the dialogue established, enabled them to look at the limitations of their spaces. This is important for being able to propose changes. Finally, the idea of appropriating a space is central in *(Des)iguales* (Moreno & Irigaray, 2015–2017) since it is about intervening directly in public areas with activist actions.

The relationship that the team develops with the space in which it carries out the activities is also relevant. In *Proyecto Quipu* (Court et al., 2013–2015) and *Barnacas* (Dhooge, 2017), the authors were deeply immersed in these spaces for a long time before generating content. This made it possible to establish connections with people and organizations that worked in that space for reasons similar to those that motivated the interactive documentaries. Thus, Lerner and Court contacted the people and organizations that were working on the claims against forced sterilizations, studied their work, and learned from the victims. "We took the time to understand these women, who ran local organizations, to find out what their experiences had been like and what their needs might be," explains Court (personal communication, October 13, 2021).

Building trust took years. It was very important to understand the previous works, Lerner argues, because the relationships between different organizations were very complex. The team needed to know how their hierarchies worked and how to generate meetings that were respectful of their modes of organization. Some artists and journalists who had previously contacted the women had created a bad impression. "The women were fed up with people looking for them, taking photos, reporting, and leaving," says Lerner (personal communication, October 13, 2021). The women were also unhappy that their situation remained unchanged and that the various initiatives had not helped. Therefore, immersion in the place made it possible to know the participants and offer them a proposal that truly interested them.

Dhooge followed a similar process in *Barnacas* (2017). He got to know the neighborhood by going there frequently, and this is how he met and contacted people who later became participants. He states that knowing the community is essential for building collective memory with respect. Dhooge and Martínez also went to meetings with people who had lived in the shanty town and who met from time to time through a Facebook page. According to Dhooge, the aim "was not to get information and that's it. We shared a lot of time and space together and I still keep in touch with some participants. It was important for me to keep in touch outside the project" (personal communication, October 8, 2021).

However, *HEBE* (Jiménez & Salvadó, 2017) and *(Des)iguales* (Moreno & Irigaray, 2015–2017) pose two different dynamics. In the first case, the relationship with the space started at the beginning of the production, in the neutral space where the team and the participants met. The *(Des)iguales* team did not attend the creation or activism spaces, either which were individual, since this project did not follow a collective meeting logic.

Achievements and Limits of the Hybrid Model

All authors cite positive aspects or explain specific situations that experienced greater depth with community involvement because of participation in a shared space. Most of the testimonies of *Proyecto Quipu* (Court et al., 2013–2015) were recorded and sent during the workshops. Lerner mentions the importance of an environment of comfort and trust, such as that generated among women during the meetings, in which they showed their support and hugged each other while recounting their experiences. Jiménez cites the shared moments in *HEBE* (Jiménez & Salvadó, 2017), which occurred not only when a task was being carried out; there were also previous, intermediate, and later moments that cultivated the relationship between the participants and led to interactions or reflections that would not have happened otherwise.

For Dhooge, the interaction between various groups during face-to-face participation is the moment in which the work's discourse is generated. This participation makes it possible to obtain more information from the people with whom the exchange is established and receive new stimuli for reflection, critical considerations, and debates on the project's themes. Therefore, face-to-face activities generate not only greater involvement and increased participation but also open new avenues for constructing the narrative.

From a more theoretical perspective, since *(Des)iguales* (Moreno & Irigaray, 2015–2017) did not get to put all its stages into practice, Irigaray states, based on his experience in other projects, that digital conception alone is not enough and that he is committed to a hybrid conception that is more balanced, because the virtual and the territorial "are superimposed layers that play a role at different times and that is where they work" (personal communication, September 14, 2021). Indeed, there was a certain lack of engagement from the participants in *(Des)iguales*. This makes sense, considering that they did not have any connection with the project or the creative team, and connections were not created through interactions in face-to-face meetings. Irigaray highlights this lack of a relationship as a limitation of the project, as it was based on a "random connection; there were people who we had no idea how they had found out about it, beyond the initial announcement we made" (personal communication, September 14, 2021). However, it should be noted that this initiative had considerable online participation in its first stage, which shows the effectiveness of virtual communication.

The importance of shared space is also reflected in one experience in *HEBE* (Jiménez & Salvadó, 2017). Although this project did not lack participant involvement in its face-to-face segment, the team also proposed a way of participating online. Jiménez says that users could send their videos showing their ideas about empowerment; however, only people who were informed about this interaction possibility during face-to-face sessions participated. The lack of a shared physical space made that collaboration difficult.

Finding a balance with online communication is important, as some experiences demonstrate. Although the main audience for *Proyecto Quipu* (Court et al., 2013–2015) were the victims of forced sterilizations, two other audiences were identified: The second audience was an international audience with Internet access, and the third was the elites of Peru, who were not interested in this issue, in general, according to Lerner. For the author, the way to reach that third audience, who was not going to pay attention to the victims, was through the second. The design combined the face-to-face participation of the first group with the online participation of the second group to obtain the desired impact on the third group.

Beyond how face-to-face activities stimulate participation, generate encounters and connections, and affect the discourse of interactive initiatives, it is necessary to look at other relevant consequences for the community. In *HEBE* (Jiménez & Salvadó, 2017), it stands out that meetings with those responsible for youth policies were organized and in which the young people of the i-doc also participated. Lerner and Court's project also supported the work of activists and connected victims from distant regions with each other and with organizations. This was, to some extent, because they organized face-to-face meetings as an important part of the initiative. Lerner stated that the Association of Peruvian Women Affected by Forced Sterilizations was formed in 2017, the first at the national level, and *Proyecto Quipu* (Court et al., 2013–2015) is "one of the projects they have in common" (personal communication, October 13, 2021).

Nevertheless, the interviewees indicated certain limitations with face-to-face participation, such as the lack of financial support to develop projects with these characteristics, which, according to Dhooge, are longer and more complex than approaches that only take place online. Irigaray also mentioned the difficulty of obtaining continued collaboration. For Court, on the other hand, the limits of *Proyecto Quipu* (Court et al., 2013–2015), such as the lack of accessibility to the media, illiteracy, the variety of languages, and the distances, ended up becoming "design possibilities, to a certain extent thanks to the numerous approaches offered by new media" (personal communication, October 13, 2021).

This research has made it possible to identify a series of stimuli that are produced only through face-to-face participation. If the indicators that were previously presented in Table 2, obtained from the categories of the model, showed descriptive elements typical of these initiatives, the relationships shown here imply specific results that this type of participation can generate in collaborative i-docs, as evidenced by the case studies. These are productive connections from the relationship between the space and the agents that are part of the process, such as the participants and the team (Table 3).

Table 3. Productive Connections in the Face-to-Face Processes of Collaborative I-Docs.

Productive Connection	Participants-Space		Team-Space		Participants-Team-Space
	Co-presence	Adaptation	Immersion	Co-presence	
<i>Proyecto Quipu</i>	x	x	x	x	
<i>Barnacas</i>	x	x	x	x	
<i>(Des)iguales</i>		x			
<i>HEBE</i>	x			x	

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Discussion

Applying the characterization model has resulted in a series of productive connections that focus on collective processes in the shared space. Co-presence when interacting is an aspect of the participant-space relationship that this analysis has shown to be important. In the cases that offered not only a physical space but also a physical space shared among the participants, we saw an improvement in the contributions. Sharing physical space contributed to generating a relationship of trust and a more comfortable environment for promoting collaboration. Furthermore, initiatives that included executing tasks in shared spaces created links between participants. *Proyecto Quipu* (Court et al., 2013–2015) stands out in this regard, although it

is also relevant for *HEBE* (Jiménez & Salvadó, 2017), which, according to Jiménez, led to an experience that enabled young people to help each other and which remains active today.

In the team-space relationship, two relevant characteristics were found to impact the case studies: adaptation and immersion. The first corresponds to a reflection on the territory in which the initiative is to be carried out. Being aware of the specificities of these places allows the initiative to be better connected with the territory. It also leads to adaptation processes that facilitate attendance and participation, such as developing alternatives after getting to know the terrain in *Barnacas* (Dhooge, 2017), using the communication networks that women were already using in *Proyecto Quipu* (Court et al., 2013–2015), or avoiding possible conflicts in the territory in *(Des)iguales* (Moreno & Irigaray, 2015–2017). The second, immersion in the space, led to the creation of connections with the different agents who lived or worked in that space. This is especially important if these agents are linked to the issues of the documentary, such as the organizations that Lerner and Court contacted. This enables the initiative to influence community building and the community's social actions.

Adaptation and immersion are interrelated processes; however, some adaptations do not require specific contact with the territory, as occurred in *(Des)iguales* (Moreno & Irigaray, 2015–2017). There are also adaptation processes that require prior immersion, as in *Proyecto Quipu* (Court et al., 2013–2015), with the knowledge and use of communication networks. This previous relationship in space has facilitated the involvement of the community at an earlier production stage, which, for Gaudenzi (2014), is important if more equal participation is to be achieved.

Finally, the participant-team relationship also has an important productive connection in co-presence. *HEBE* (Jiménez & Salvadó, 2017) can evaluate this question by contrasting it with the other case studies. This initiative did not find, like some others, an already formed group that was eager to participate, nor did it intervene in the spaces of the participants; however, collective interaction, both with the participants and with each other, facilitated high involvement in this project. This was also achieved by limiting the group of participants so that the sessions were more intimate, promoting connections between young people. It should be noted that when the co-presence occurs with the audiences, the "emplaced interaction" is favored (Aston, 2017), since in *HEBE*, *Proyecto Quipu* (Court et al., 2013–2015), and *Barnacas* (Dhooge, 2017), the involvement continues in different forums.

All these productive connections point to one issue that Aston and Odorico (2018) have highlighted regarding polyphony: that is, it is necessary to have more than just collaboration. This research has shown that participatory dynamics are positive, but shared presence and collective action increase the contributions of the subjects. Thus, interaction in shared spaces leads to empowerment processes that enable local interventions aimed at social change and community expression, as shown by collaborative creation experiences that, before digital communication, were carried out in certain territories (Waugh et al., 2010). With this, narratives linked to space acquire prominence (Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2021). Moreover, it has been recognized that when the participating community shares a social objective, in this case related to the territory, this favors the community's involvement in the creative process (Rose, 2011).

Finally, this research, which aims to offer a broad picture of these face-to-face participation processes and their results in the medium term, made it impossible to analyze the terrain of a specific case to gain the perceptions of the participants themselves. Future research along these lines could conduct a detailed analysis

of a particular project, documenting its development through face-to-face activities. Furthermore, although the selection of cases could be considered a limitation of the research, we would like to highlight that the differences between cases are positive, as they correspond to the recognition of different social and cultural contexts. This makes a comparative study possible and corrects the lack of attention given to the singularities of the different projects that some researchers have criticized (Rogers, 2016; Shaw, 2014).

Conclusion

This research proposes a characterization of the face-to-face participation processes that occur in collaborative i-docs. Four cases were studied to evaluate this situated activity and the role it plays in these productions. Contrasting the different initiatives has given us some general characteristics and singularities that highlight the different applications of this hybrid approach. An original characterization model was developed in this research based on the two variables that distinguish our object of study: face-to-face participation and physical space. This model was then applied to each of the cases analyzed to assess how the two variables intervened in the initiative and its social expression.

Applying the model to the case studies allowed us to determine a series of productive connections, which, in the specific case of the i-docs analyzed, generated relevant stimuli for collective participation and the social foundations of the projects. This analysis also focused on some minimum units of the process, such as the team and the participants, to assess their interactions with the space and to understand how the territory conditions the initiative.

These links have an important relationship with participant involvement and, in some cases, improvement in collaboration. In the cases studied, the interaction of the participants with each other or with the team in a shared space was found to be particularly beneficial. This was illustrated by *HEBE* (Jiménez & Salvadó, 2017), which had a high level of commitment from its participants in its face-to-face aspect, but did not receive testimonies online, other than from people who had been part of the face-to-face meetings. Furthermore, we reiterate that most of the testimonies that were given in *Proyecto Quipu* (Court et al., 2013–2015) were recorded in the face-to-face meetings, partly because of the support and trust that existed among the women who attended.

Face-to-face activities do not necessarily generate the required implications for collaboration; the initiatives also need to benefit from a shared space and a collective interaction. This can be observed in *(Des)iguales* (Moreno & Irigaray, 2015–2017), because, as Irigaray explains, the lack of commitment was partly because relationships were based only on a random connection.

The research also reveals how these digital and interactive initiatives are still conditioned by spatial issues. This implies adaptation and immersion processes in the space where the action occurs. The adaptation process optimizes the involvement of the participants and takes advantage of the singularities of the space that benefit the entire initiative. The immersion of the creative team in the space can generate a series of significant interactions, such as the formation of networks with people or organizations that work in that space or that have influence over a relevant issue to the community, as shown by *Proyecto Quipu* (Court et al., 2013–2015) and *Barnacas* (Dhooge, 2017).

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Appendix: Interview Guide

Project and face-to-face activities:

- A. What social conflict does the project address? What were the project's objectives?
- B. What face-to-face activities were carried out with the participants?

Participation:

- A. What did you want to achieve with the face-to-face participation?
- B. What profile did the participants have and how did you reach them so they could become involved?
- C. Was dialogue or interaction between participants promoted?

Space:

- A. How does the space of the activities relate to the project's objectives and message?
- B. How does the space of the activities relate to the participants?
- C. Did the activities incorporate a process of reflection on that space?

Results:

- A. Has the local participation served to raise awareness of the conflict addressed or to identify possible solutions?

- B. Has the community had an opportunity to initiate any action in response to the conflict?
- C. Has the local aspect of the project generated ongoing collaboration between participants?
- D. What are the positive elements and limitations of this face-to-face formula?