

Challenges and limitations

Engaging with minority communities to understand and analyse their realities can be powerful in creating inclusive spaces. Nevertheless, the diverse challenges that arise from these experiences can represent participants' frustrations. In this section, I highlight some of the challenges we faced in such interactions; however, these were not the only challenges. Regardless of how experienced scholars may be in collaborative practices, new challenges will appear, and being flexible enough to deal with them is part of the learning – or unlearning – process.

The first challenge relates to power structures. The presence of a group of scholars or architects may create friction and invisible hierarchies that influence the intended process. Although trying to avoid these frictions should always be at the heart of the matter, acknowledging that there will always be some conflict is crucial. In the words of the student group that used photography as a mapping method,

[w]e also had to find the balance between providing structure to the process and allowing it to progress without becoming too rigid and unintentionally becoming tutors. It was not easy to find this limit between giving momentum to the project and leading at the expense of self-initiative. For example, the youth were more inclined to agree with our propositions rather than proposing their own, such as when defining the theme of the photo series.¹

The second challenge is the limitations imposed by academia, funding bodies and professional fields (e.g. deadlines, structures). The necessary time and po-

1 Extract from the Ebook of the Studio Insurgent Design: unlearning practices through marginalized spaces (Juliana Canedo, Tuanne Monteiro, Qusay Amer, Maureen Abi-Ghanem and Francesca Ceola), TU Berlin 2024. Students: Omar Saleh Zenbaey, Emanuelle Dubot, Luis Michael Baumann, Elise Schreck, Jakob Honz.

tential outcomes for collaborative activities are not necessarily suitable and, in most cases, conflict with the time frames, budget structures and required outcomes in those spheres. In many cases, these conflicts might present extra work for researchers dedicated to developing collaborative activities. They often have the burden of doubled work to develop their research in two different languages, and their activities must be conducted in a limited time frame due to the length of the semester, the funding body's deadlines or the contractor's requirements.

The final challenge relates to the coordination of the participants' schedules. Participants' active engagement is necessary for conducting collaborative activities. Coordinating between different schedules, expectations and goals, as well as dealing with last-minute cancellations, might be frustrating and require a level of flexibility that often impacts the envisioned outcomes.