

IMPACT IS A DESTINATION.  
DISTRIBUTION IS THE MAP.

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Impact  
Distribution  
Lab



# Participant Care Challenges and Strategies

SPEAKER

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PEACE IS LOUD

# Stephanie Palumbo

USA



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Documentary impact  
strategist and producer

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Director of Film Impact and  
Innovation at Peace is Loud

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# Welcome + overview

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**Section ① Introduction to impact and participant care**

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**Section ② Participant care challenges**

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**Section ③ Participant care strategies**

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## Section ①

# Introduction to impact and participant care

# Impact

**The influence of a film  
for transformative social  
change**

# Impact campaign

**A set of strategic activities  
to maximize a film's potential  
for social change**

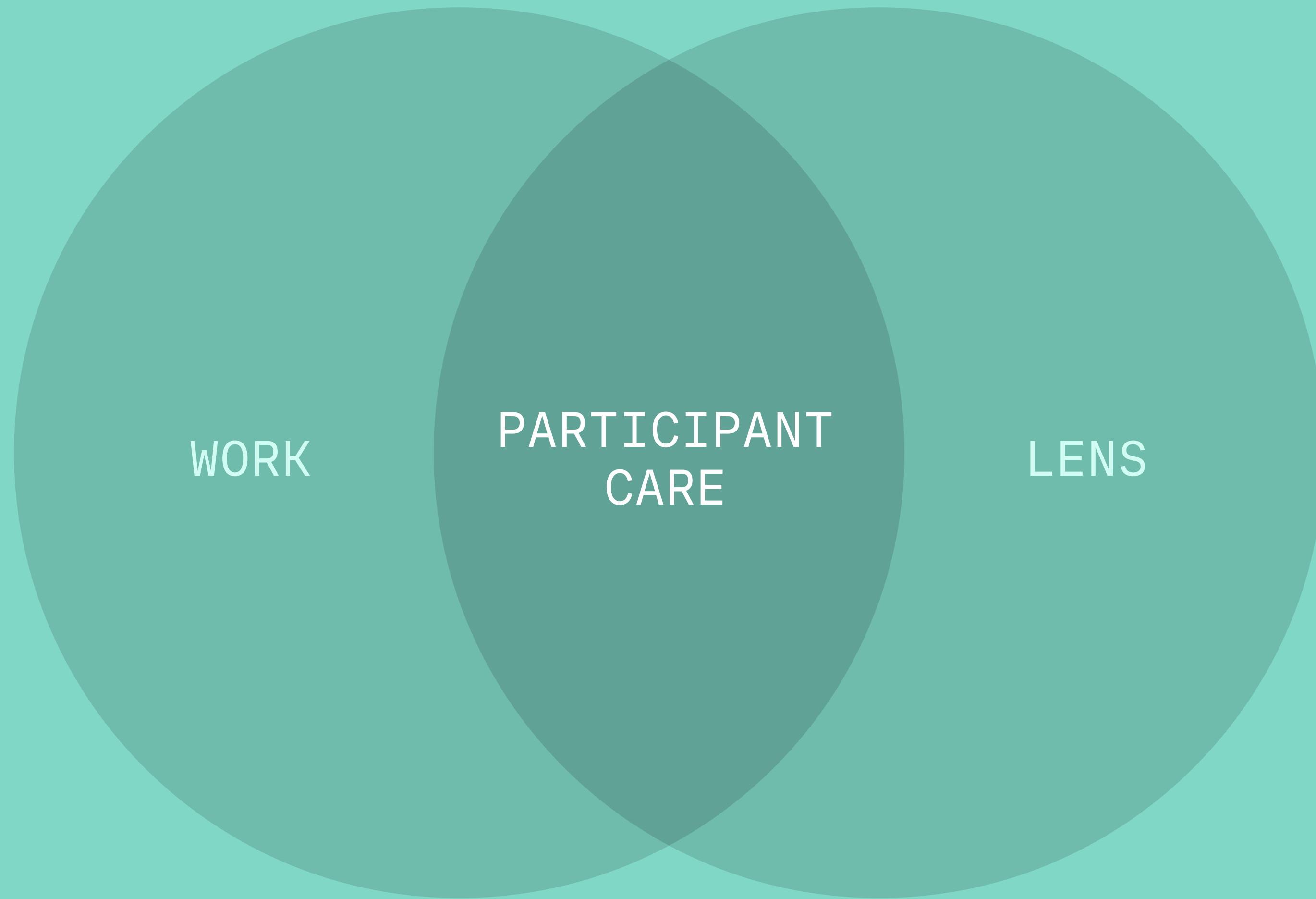
SCREENINGS

PARTNERSHIPS

DIGITAL CAMPAIGNS

SPECIAL EVENTS

# Impact campaign



# Impact campaign

**How is the work with  
participants studied?**



# Participant care

**Providing the conditions  
that allow documentary  
film participants to thrive**

# Film participants

- ① **Ordinary people**  
who share their life stories on screen
- ② **Organizers or activists**  
who might be in some degree  
of vulnerability because of the story  
that we're sharing

# Participant care

**Ethical**

**Strategic**

**Pragmatic**

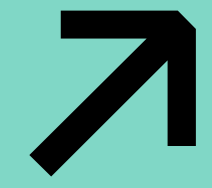
## Section 2

# Participant care challenges

# Challenges



Relationships and boundaries



Consent and agency



Health and safety



Power and representation



Money and compensation



Release and distribution

## Section ③

# Participant care strategies

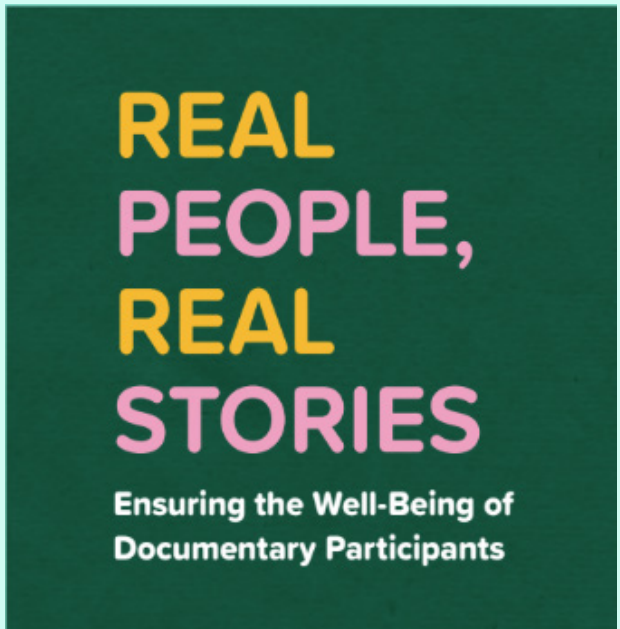
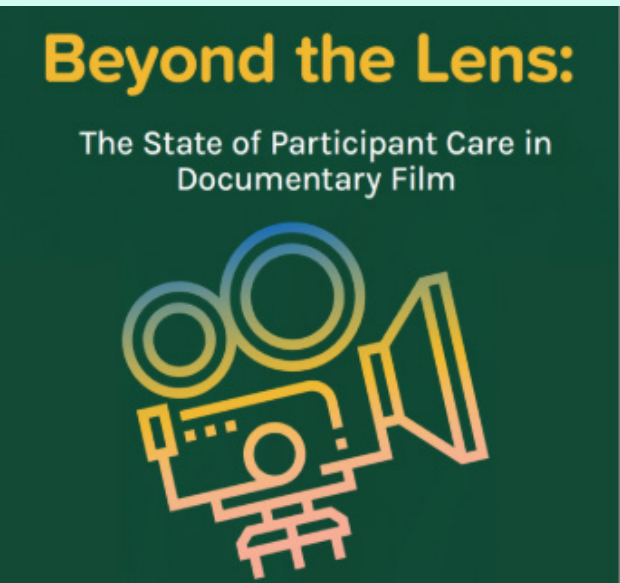
Co-created with  
Jennifer Tiexiera



Co-created with  
Margie Ratliff



Co-created with  
documentality



# Strategies



Transparency



What will the film's promotional and impact campaign look like?

What will the film's distribution look like?

If I want to do my own publicity or interviews, does it require approval from the filmmakers first?

What are the filmmaker's expectations for my participation in press or promotional activities? What, if anything, is required of me?

- \* Will I go to the film's premiere?
- \* Will I be part of the Q&As at festivals, premieres, and screenings?
- \* Who will pay for and arrange my travel? Will I be paid?
- \* Will I be expected to speak on panels and/or do interviews?

Will I have the opportunity to access a PR specialist and/or media training when the film releases?

Will there be an impact campaign? If so, will I be involved in it?

- \* Will I have a say in shaping the campaign's goals and strategy?
- \* Will I be paid for my participation?

# Blank Duty of Care Template

Title of Project:

Participant's Name:

Director's Name:

Point of Contact's Name:

## Duty of Care Plan

- ⚙ **Introduction:**
- ⚙ **Consent:**
- ⚙ **Content & Logistics:**
- ⚙ **Compensation:**
- ⚙ **Participant Rights:**
- ⚙ **Creative Rights:**
- ⚙ **Health & Wellbeing:**
- ⚙ **Protection:**
- ⚙ **Distribution & Impact:**

# Strategies



Transparency



Informed, ongoing consent



Who chose the dates?

These dates were determined by production and delivery schedules, including when editing began and when Jennifer would lose her power as director after delivering to the network.

When did she begin the consent calendar process?

Right away, in pre-production. It went hand in hand with discussing people's potential participation and the series' north star.

What methodology did she use to create the calendar?

Jennifer created her own internal Google Calendar, but since not everyone uses a digital calendar, she let the participants decide how they wanted to receive this information. She ultimately shared a Google doc listing all of the dates, then made phone call reminders to each person in advance of each date. They figured out how much lead time to give with each call depending on the nature of the event or milestone.

# Strategies



Transparency



Informed, ongoing consent



Safety and care



Representation and collaboration



Exploring compensation

### Filming Movements/Communities:

- ◆ If making a film about a movement or a community, how do you choose which individuals get paid, and by extension, which don't?
- ◆ If you pay the people with the most screen time, are you arbitrarily rewarding them for having a compelling on-camera presence?
- ◆ Will that money create new power dynamics within the movement/community?
- ◆ What is the impact if you introduce money into a community that doesn't have a formal economy?

### Practicalities

- ◆ How will you pay your participants, in literal terms? For instance, what form makes the most sense—cash, check, bank transfers? What currency do they use?
- ◆ How much will you pay them? How will you calculate this? Who decides?
- ◆ Are there opportunities to pay participants for additional contributions to the film (eg, location fees, archival licensing, impact campaign participation)?

### Alternative Compensation

- ◆ Instead of paying individuals, how might you provide compensation that better or benefits a community in a holistic way?
- ◆ Are there other types of opportunities you could offer, including skillshares or trainings?
- ◆ While many films don't make a profit, is profit-sharing an option?



# Strategies

- Transparency
- Informed, ongoing consent
- Safety and care
- Representation and collaboration
- Exploring compensation
- Support for emotional well-being
- Prioritize accessibility
- Post-release support



# “Fire Through Dry Grass”



FIRE THROUGH DRY GRASS (2023), CO-DIRECTED BY ANDRES "JAY" MOLINA AND ALEXIS NEOPHYTIDES  
PHOTO CREDIT: ELIAS WILLIAMS



# “Fire Through Dry Grass”

Three core principles ↙

①

Equity

②

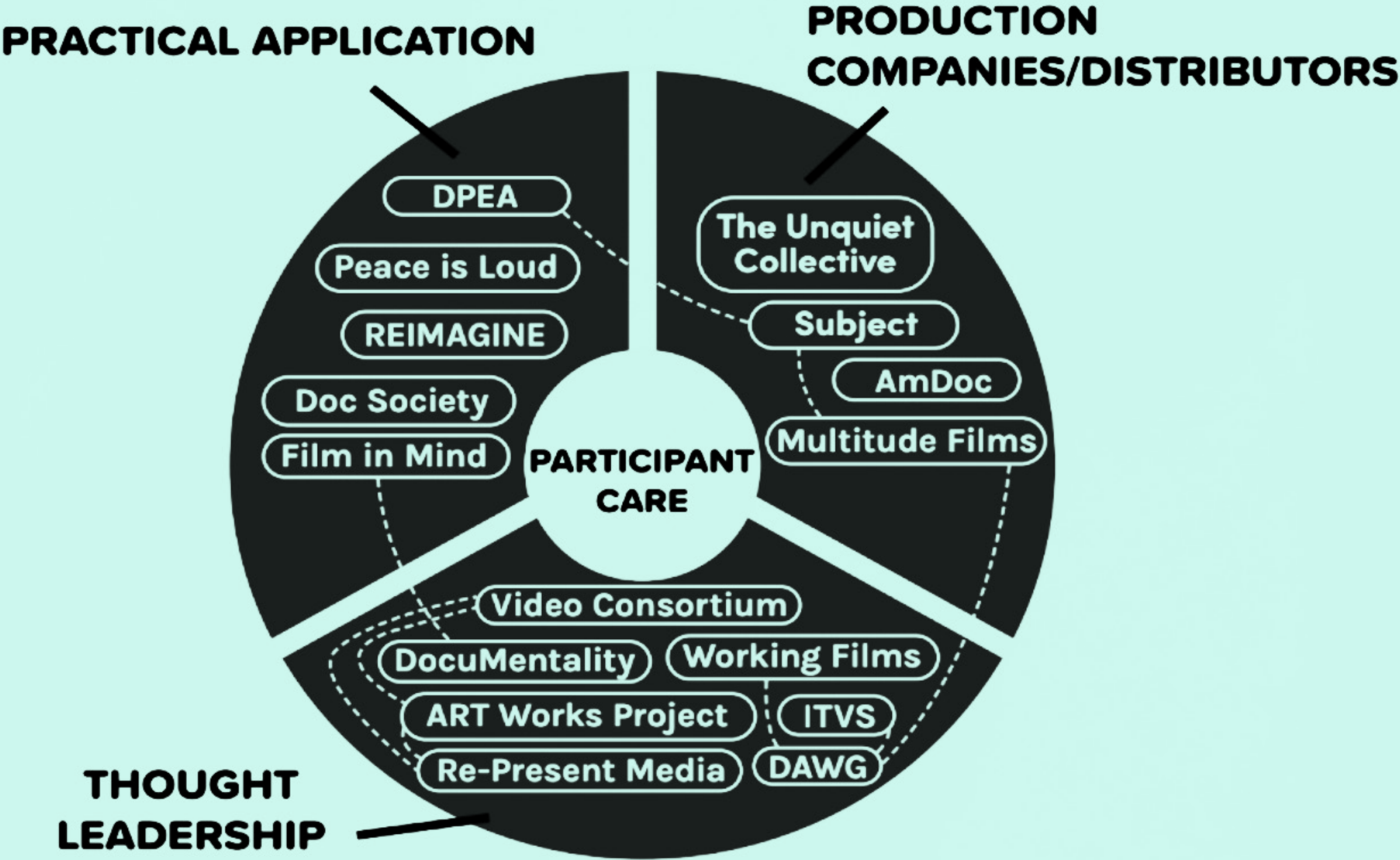
Safety

③

Representation

# “Fire Through Dry Grass”

- Preferred working styles were discussed and agreed upon
- A disability justice advocate joined the team
- Compensation rates were set
- Mental health support was available
- Impact campaign goals and activities were outlined
- Partners were consulted
- A rapid response plan was created



# Stay in touch!

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ACCESS OUR RESOURCES



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