5 Step Escalation Plan

The Vision

Imagine a plan to make sure the interests of **people and nature are taken into careful consideration in all decisions**. How might our society look if none were left behind, as we transition together to a healthier, fairer society?

We have seen corporate offices and government buildings occupied all over the country in recent years, including those with the simple demand to follow the recommendations of a local community assembly on issues that are important to those campaigners.

Community assemblies are one tool in the toolbox of activists; they are a great way to bring people together, bridging divides and laying out practical steps towards fair and inclusive transformation and green transition. They can be one part of making our communities more resilient and bringing us closer to community influencers.

Without effective community decision-making, there can be no just transition; assemblies for the people, by the people help shifts in power.

We know the voices of local communities are systematically ignored or purposefully polarised and that things are getting worse. That's why we need stronger, engaged communities and regular assemblies everywhere to ensure we are all heard in respectful, inclusive and effective ways.

To apply people powered pressure, you need to be clear who your target(s) is or are, e.g.

Relevant authority

Depending upon the local issue that you have identified and the structure of government in your area, the authority that has relevant powers may be your county or borough council, your metropolitan authority (e.g. in London that is the Great London Authority or the London Assembly), your devolved authority (e.g. Welsh Assembly), or Westminster.

Relevant decision-makers

These are the people with the power to make decisions about your issues of concern. They could be councillors sitting on your county or borough council, the metropolitan authorities, members of the devolved authority, your local MP, or executives of corporations (the company board members, CEO or other key staff).

Do invite these key decision makers to your assembly, either as expert speakers (with speech parameters set by the organising group), or as general participants, like other members of the

public. We want **radical inclusivity**, so get them onboard. If they say no, at least you know where you stand!

The XR **Community Assemblies Campaign** group believe that:

DEMOCRATIC ASSEMBLIES + DIRECT ACTION = FAIRER SOLUTIONS EVERYWHERE

and that there is another way to bring about change via a 5 step process...

A Simple 5 Step Plan

1. **Research**:

- Gather organising group.
- Look outside your bubble and make local alliances.
- Choose a local issue together.
- Get out on the street doing outreach.
- Ask your community what they care about and tell them what you are doing.
- Find out which relevant authority/ies* has/have power over that issue.

2. **Prepare**:

- Find your accessible assembly venue. If you are wanting to escalate issues where your local council hold decision making power, then your action will be ideally outside or near your relevant authority offices.
- Plan an event
- Publicise and promote everywhere.
- Get people signed up for it.
- Encourage as many local people as possible to train to be a facilitator or notetaker. Point them to:
  - **XR's Community Assembly training video**
  - **Trust The People's regular Community Assembly training course**
- Invite relevant decision-makers**.
- Bring food
- Think about how to make it a great event for everyone.

3. **Act**:

- Run your assembly.
- Publish the results and take them to your relevant authority. Demand a response within a reasonable time frame
- Demand assemblies and galvanise others who could benefit from increasing democratic decision making to join in.

4. **Occupy**:

- If your target says "Yes", celebrate!
- If they say no:
  - invite everyone involved to occupy the authority or company building on a given date. Invite your local media,
  - Invite your nan and neighbours!
  - Rebel!
  - Repeat!

5. **Escalate**:

- Take your assembly results to your MP.
- Show them what your community is doing and what it wants.
- Tell your MP that their constituents want this form of democracy in Westminster
- Explain that you want a Citizens' Assembly on Climate and Ecological Justice now as a first step towards a better form of democracy.
- Tell them that there will be no fair solutions to our crises without fixing our broken politics everywhere.

More Info & Support

At the end of 2023, into early 2024, over twenty local XR groups had run community assemblies, badged and unbadged. When XR funding ran out, Humanity Project took up the mantle and continued supporting what they called 'POPS' (now 'Popular assemblies'). Since then, assemblies, peoples' assemblies, peoples' juries, etc. are happening regularly around the UK.

There are other organisations joining the push for upgrading our democracy, whom you can read about elsewhere in this book. That said, our focus in XR is our Third Demand for a Citizens' Assembly on Climate and Ecological Justice. The role of the Community Assemblies Campaign crew is in helping people understand the 3rd demand, through experiencing deliberative democracy where they are and seeing how this might work at a national level.

The **assembly escalation plan** has been based on a successful action by the **Cornwall Climate Coalition**, who consistently show what is possible with collaboration with local and district authorities. With some tailoring to the realities of specific authorities, there is no reason why their example can’t work elsewhere.

Assembly Escalation is a direct action campaign to build community resilience and elevate our Third Demand to encourage UK-wide conversations, starting at the grassroots and taking it to the pillars of power. Organising an assembly is sowing the seed at the local level for democratic change and **opening conversations on a Citizens Assembly on Climate and Ecological Justice**.

Community assemblies provide an opportunity to reach out to and build alliances with local community organisations, aligning with XR UK's values as far as possible. They offer one way to give local groups a more powerful voice and help to include a more diverse range of people and viewpoints.

We are stronger together, but **unity does not mean uniformity**. It is vital that **local groups are prepared to stretch their comfort zones**. We are all learning together through practising. We need to listen to the voices of other community groups and ensure that projects worked on together are done in the spirit of cooperation, mutual aid and common good.

Let's adapt, unite, build together with this proven tool in our community building toolbox.

- Learn from the Cornwall successes
- Watch this Video about community assemblies
- Learn about Citizens Assemblies here on the Rebel Toolkit
- Tell the movement about your assembly!
- Local Alliance Building Guidance

Join the UK Assemblies group; the Community Assemblies team is here to help every step of our journey into upgrading our democracy together.

- Email: assemblies@extinctionrebellion.uk
- Join us on the UK Assemblies Telegram chat
