

Community Building Tools

- [Community Maps - To Understand our Communities](#)
- [Group Activities - To Build Our Own Community](#)
- [Community Activities - To Share with Our Wider Communities](#)

Community Maps - To Understand our Communities

What are Community Maps?

Community Maps are ways for us to understand what is happening in our communities. Here we will demonstrate the following maps:

1. **Personal Maps** - to understand how we interact with our communities
2. **Associational Maps** - to understand who is doing things in our communities
3. **Physical Maps** - to understand our local landscapes
4. **Action Maps** - to understand how we take action in our local landscapes
5. **Community Portraits** - to understand who holds your local communities together

Community Mapping is a tool which guides us in identifying the strengths, assets and resources within our Local Areas.

For us this means knowing who we are talking to, what is already happening, how to reach people, and how to be as effective as we can

1. Personal Maps

How is your community life?

Activity

- Put a dot in the middle of a page, this is you
- Draw a line off it for every group you are part of - write what that group is. (can be vague here if you want)
- Think of all the roles you hold, personal, professional - does this add more lines?
- Think of the hobbies you have - does this add more lines?
- Think of all the interaction you have in a week, are you a regular at a coffee shop? Do you chat to shop assistant ever saturday? can you add more lines?

Personal Map.jpg
Image not found. To be unknown

2. The Life of a Neighborhood

A neighbourhood is made up of many associations, both formal and informal. An association is any group of people who gather to do things. It could be a chess club, a group of friends who go to the pub on a Friday night, or a local Scouts or Guides group.

- What associations exist in your Local Area?
- What brings people together?
- Don't forget the informal associations!

Consider:

- Communities of Interest
- Communities of Place
- Communities of Identity
- Communities of Practice
- Communities of Action

Associational Life

3. Physical Maps

Physical Maps look not at the connections between people but at the geography of the local area. The way communities interact is connected to their place. Some of our towns have lots of potential meeting spaces and promote connection whereas others have a lack of third space where groups of people can meet to talk.

Notice Boards

- Where are they?
- Who looks after them?
- Who is using them and why?
- Are your posters on them?
- Are there any informal boards?

Notice Boards

Meeting Places

Where do people actually meet?

- Free Places
- Bumping Spaces

- Third Spaces
- Spaces for specific Communities

How do you interact with these spaces? Do your actions interact with them?

Meeting Places Meeting place type unknown

Neighborhood Assets

The assets of your neighbourhood are anything that exists there which enriches the experience of being in that space. They could be as simple as having wildflowers planted on the verge for pollinators or as complex as regular Community Assemblies where the neighbourhood discusses how to spend money.

Consider the following assets:

- Associations
- Places
- People
- Institutions
- Exchanges
- Stories

Below is an example of the Neighbourhood Assest identified by locals on King Street, Norwich.

Asset	Description	Examples
Associations	Any group of people coming together to do a thing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - King Street Neighbourhood Association - Wild King Street - Book Club - Save Wensum Lodge Adult Learning Centre Group - Carrow House Artist Studios - Clubs at the Wensum Sport Centre
Places	Locations where people can meet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skate Park - Wensum Sport Centre - St Julian's Church - The Last Pub Standing - Butterfly Cafe - St Peter's Churchyard
People	All the gifts people bring to the neighbourhood such as skills, knowledge, talents and experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creative window displays in houses - The existence of the associations - Whatsapp Group - Litter pickers - People who adopt the planter boxes - Gardeners who plant the planter boxes - Friendly local business owners/employees

Asset	Description	Examples
Institutions	- Organisations that provide services for the neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kings Centre (Methodist Church) - National Writing Centre - St Julian's Church - Wensum Sport Centre - St John's Ambulance Training Centre
Exchanges	Any time something is exchanged such as skills, ideas, objects, money or alternative currencies. (Noting that if a monetary exchange is not a local business it becomes extractive rather than a local asset)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Last Pub Standing - Yoga Studio - Corner Shop - Butterfly Cafe - Bicycle Links (skills/training) - Book Club - Neighbours making Planters - Whatsapp Group - Noticeboards
Stories	Things people say about the neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blue Plaques - Built Heritage - medieval buildings - Generational stories about Waterfront - St Julien shrine and stories - Marking of old rivers in pavement - Artwork in windows - Noticeboard

4. Action Maps

Where do local actions happen - why?

- City Centre
- Target
- Seat of Power

Consider:

- How do the locations change with the type of action?
- How have locations changed with time?
- Where might they be in the future?

Action Map of Cambridge

5. Community Portraits

People are the unit of Community

- What is strong?
- Who connects people?
- Who would you ask for help?

- Who do they know?
- Who tells the best stories?

Are you a part of these networks?

run an after school club.png

Lets Get Mapping!

- Know your People and be Known
- Know who to ask
- Know where to put a Poster
- Know your Local Place

Remember

The Legal System takes our community seriously. **So should we!**

Group Activities - To Build Our Own Community

Community is something we build and create for each other.

Here we have outlined a few examples of what you could do in your group to intentionally build the Community.

- The Gift Circle
 - Campfire Stories
 - Local Imagery
 - Posters!
-

1. The Gift Circle

What is it?

A tool to better understand the individuals in your group, what they are interested in and the skills and experiences they bring to the group. It can be used online although works best in physical space right before a break, which then allows participants to approach each other with curiosity.

Outline:

Four questions to be asked to the group in rounds, quick enough that people cannot elaborate too much.

1. What could you teach someone?
2. What could you show someone?
3. What do you know a lot about?
4. What are you passionate about?

Then invite the group to take a break so people can approach each other to ask follow up questions on anything they picked up on.

How does this Build Community

It is a great starter activity for new groups looking to build community, making visible the strengths, skills and interests already within the group. It can also be used when people from different communities are coming together to work on a project.

Even with established groups it helps to **build connection** between group members who may only interact with each other in one context. By continually coming back to our passions and what is strong in our community we can start to plan activities and action from a place of strength.

The Gift Circle is also a good starting point when looking to **share skills** with each other. Knowing what you could possibly learn from those you are already connected to.

An Example

1. What could you teach someone?

- I can teach you to mend your trousers

2. What could you show someone?

- I can show you where to get the best gluten free and vegan banana bread in Norwich

3. What do you know a lot about?

- I know a lot about native plants

4. What are you passionate about?

- I am passionate about Zine making as art and protest

2. Campfire Stories

What is it?

An invitation to tell our stories.

This can be structured or unstructured, it can be around a literal campfire or at a community meal, or any other way you can imagine!

Outline:

Sometimes storytelling emerges naturally when you create the environment for it. Sometimes asking people outright to tell their stories helps.

Some potential spring boards:

- How did you join Extinction Rebellion?
- What is your best XR memory?
- What is your proudest XR moment?

How does this Build Community

As communities, we are the stories we tell about ourselves. Through storytelling we share what it means to be a part of this community and **what connects us together**.

We **build our common culture** through the art of storytelling. It is the overlap in our stories, the shared experiences and how we remember them that build our sense of community.

3. Local Imagery

What is it?

Flexing our creativity and individuality by designing visuals that are unique to our groups. Every XR group is unique in place, style and what matters most to them. Local imagery may focus on local campaigns, landmarks, or artistic flair and style. When we come together in big actions it is wonderful to see the diversity in our creative visions!

Local Visuals or type unknown

Here are some examples including:

- XR Grenoble featuring a cable car,
- XR East of England with the sun rising in the East
- XR Marseille with the skyline

Outline:

Consider where the artistic and creative energy is in your group. This may be with an Arts Working Group or it may be shared between everyone.

Create time and space to play with visuals, materials and designs. Don't be afraid to experiment!

Here are some more examples of the really creative directions Local Groups have taken:

Local Imagery Photos

How does this Build Community

How we **express ourselves creatively** is a huge part of building our XR community. Simply the process of getting out the art materials and sitting together to create builds community whether it is painting placards or designing local print blocks.

Coming together as a group to design visuals that are unique to you, your place, and what matters to your group helps to bind you together as a group. In creating group imagery and identity we **create a common culture** for the group. This creates a real sense of belonging.

To be able to adorn our drums and jackets with patches and stickers that mark us as part of the group ties us together.

To go on large marches and rebellions as a group with a clear visual identity such as the Oxford Bees or the Hedgehogs in the North really demonstrates our diversity as a wider community all working towards a **shared purpose** in ways that matter to us.

4. Create Local Posters

What is it?

Designing, printing, and displaying physical posters is a great tool to build our communities. We can use them to share our message in a clear and striking way. We can use them to invite new people into our spaces. We can use them to tell stories and inspire action.

Outline:

First, consider the purpose of the poster. Is it to invite people to your group's meetings? Is it to advertise an event? Is it a call to action such as switching banks?

How are you going to make the ask as simple as possible? Can you put a map to your meeting space on the poster? Can you add a QR code to scan? Is it clear what the ask is?

- What's the Ask?
- Is there a Location?
- When is it? Date & Time
- How do people find out more?

Now, where are you going to put the posters so people can see them? Do you have a **map of your local Notice Boards**? You want to make the most of your printing costs so where do people stop to look at posters? Think about where we stop moving - bus stops, bathroom stalls, traffic lights.

Local Posters for type unknown

How does this Build Community

Posters allow us to share our work with the wider community **inviting them in and including them** in our events, action and meetings. They also **clearly communicate what is going on**, allowing people to step in and out of interaction with the group, you may notice the same faces popping up!

Poster making can be a **creative opportunity**, to make something that catches the eye! There is scope to **share artistic skills** as well!

Make it Super Simple!

Poster making can have a very low barrier to entry.

Collect:

- A4 Paper
- Coloured Pens & Pencils or Paints!
- A Photocopier
- Some enthusiastic Rebels

You can spend an evening together around a table with some snacks and everyone makes their own version of a poster advertising the meeting, how to get there, and why they love to go.

With the photocopier everyone can leave that session with 50 posters to put up in town!

Some of our best community building tools are simple, scrappy and inexpensive!

Does your group do something that belongs on this list? Let your Regional Gardener know and it may end up here!

Community Activities - To Share with Our Wider Communities

Community building asks us to identify the strengths we have in our group and share them with the wider community. This can look like holding events for the community to attend such as banner making workshops, or responding to asks from other groups such as bringing drums to a rally.

Think about what you as a group can offer and make those offerings visible! Here we have a few examples:

- [Pop-Up Spaces](#)
 - [Banner Making](#)
 - [Block Printing](#)
 - [Beginner Drumming Sessions](#)
 - [Zine Workshop](#)
-

1. Pop-Up Spaces

What is it?

Any temporary space we create as a group. Stalls, actions, talks and exhibitions are all examples of spaces we create that pop-up in the community space!

These are the spaces we create in which people can interact with us, where conversations are started and ideas shared.

It is in these spaces that we begin to create, communicate and invite people into our visions of the world we want. Through the way we act, the care we show and the curiosity for those who step in to visit or join.

How does this Build Community

Every interaction within the wider community is a potential connection. **Every connection adds to the network.** And the more interconnected our communities are the stronger we become. It is only through conversation that we learn who our **community connectors** are, that we discover the hidden talents of our neighbours and the passions that drive each of us.

30.08.24_Upside Democracy_Windsor_Oil Slick_Gareth Morris-3.jpeg

2. Banner Making

What is it?

Banner making workshop is a space where members of any group can come to make banners, flags and placards for an upcoming action.

Outline:

You will need:

- A space to host the workshop
- Newspaper and an old sheet to protect surfaces
- Fabric
- Paints (acrylic or fabric paint) & Tubs
- Brushes
- Letter templates, print blocks or stencils

You can also consider having eyelets to add and a sewing machine to hem the edges either before or after painting. Remind everyone to wear scrappy clothes or bring an apron.

From this point it's up to you what you create. It may be XR themed or it may be for another group's event, or for a campaign!

More information and graphics for banner making can be found on the **Banners** page.

How does this Build Community

Banner printing creates a **shared purpose** that can be realised quickly and through simple tasks that can be done with little teaching. There is space for people to share tasks and being simple there is **space for conversation and connection**.

There is re little teaching involved in banner making so once someone learns how to do it they can easily **pass it on to others** and become a teacher or designer of some wonderful banners!

Norwich Banner type unknown

3. Block Printing

What is it?

Block printing stands are a fantastic offering of our skills into the community. They invite people to have fun in a creative way and connect.

Outline:

You will need:

- Print Blocks
- Swatches or clothes to print on
- Foam roller & acrylic sheet
- Ink
- Lots of old newspapers

All the information needed to run an effective print stall can be found here: **Block Printing** by the Art Blockers.

How does this Build Community

By creating a small task that can be done with the hands with very little teaching required space is created fo conversation, **connection and the sharing of stories**. The act of **creating together** also brings people together by experimenting with ideas.

There is potential for the expression of both **individual and shared identity** in wearing patches and printing clothes.

4. Beginner Drumming Session

What is it?

A drumming workshop for beginners is a great offering and entry point into the thriving community of Rhythms.

It is also a great offering of skills to the community as our bands support not just XR actions but a wide range of events that happen locally, showing solidarity and care for other groups.

Outline:

You will need:

- A collection of Drums
- Ear Defenders!
- A space where making noise is not going to be a problem
- A whistler helps but isn't absolutely necessary

Equipment List

Drums: Bass, Mid, High, Repinique, Snare

Backpack: Agogo bells, Tamborim, Shaker, Ear Defenders, Beaters, Straps for Drums

A session for beginner drummers is fairly easy to hold. Start of with learning a simple rhythm like **Funk** and go from there.

You can find more resources and contact XR Rhythms here: <https://xrrhythms.uk>

How does this Build Community

The low barrier into drumming and our Rhythms spaces creates **fun entry points** for new members, and space where **new connections** can be built.

Our Rhythms spaces really prioritise the **creation of safe and inclusive space** for our communities and by consistently showing up in solidarity to events organised by other groups we show are commitment to the work and **purpose that exists between** these groups.

01.11.24 - Insure Our Survival Birmingham - Vladimir Morozov-19.jpg

5. Zine Workshop

What is it?

A creative workshop that allows people to express themselves in many different ways! Zines have a long history in activism and are a great, low budget tool we can use to share ideas, get people thinking!

Holding a Zine Workshop invites community members to consider the skills, interests and passions they have that they may wish to share in a new creative way.

Outline:

You will need:

- Some old magazines, scissors & glue
- Paints, pens, pencils
- A4 paper
- Photocopier

Either around a table or scattered on the floor, let people create whatever they want! It may be an Art Zine where they draw on all the pages, maybe they create a comic book, maybe a workshop outline people can run, maybe a collection of poems or essays on a topic. The possibilities are endless.

Make time to scan, photocopy and share the zines people have made! Maybe take a few away with you to give to friends. Some notice boards have areas for flyers and zines - share them even wider!

Zine Folding or type unknown

How does this Build Community

Zines are a fantastic way to share information, ideas and resources! They are also great tools for artists, poets and writers to share tasters of their work. Encouraging people to **express themselves creatively**.

A workshop like this really allows a **window into the skills, interests and assets** in your local community. From simply socialising in such a space you now know who the artists are, who the writers are, who can offer specific skills, and what people are passionate about! This in many ways can be used as a form of **gift circle**.

Here are some examples of zines:

Example Zines
