

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.

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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!
