Why Community Building? □□

Communities are so important in life, bringing us joy and support. They can also powerful tools in the times we are in!

There are three main reasons why community building is so important, especially for Extinction Rebellion at this moment:

1. Communities create change in ways that matter to them.
2. Stronger communities mean healthier rebels and a stronger movement.
3. Community building generates cultural momentum and empowers rebels to take action.

Communities Are Strong Forces For Change

When looking at changing the system to mitigate and adapt to the climate and ecological crises there are often two camps: individual change and governmental change. In the middle of these is community change - often overlooked but extremely powerful.

Strong communities disempower institutions that do not serve them simply by existing!

- Consider the street that reclaimed its public space by planting boxes of flowers and edible plants where cars used to park.
- Imagine a world where our local communities met the majority of our food needs. Would we need big supermarkets and long supply chains?
- In a world where those with power are not meeting our basic needs and in many cases working against them, why not do it ourselves? Nothing scares them more than us not being dependent on them!

Thriving communities are known to care more for their local environments, have better health outcomes, mitigate the negative effects of poverty, and be better prepared for disasters such as floods or fires.

Communities challenge the underlying systems that drive climate and ecological breakdown, and actively set up alternatives.

> **Questions to Ask:**

> - What has your local community organised to achieve?
> - What are the success stories?
> - What would your vision for the future be?
> - How would you include more people and different types of people in that vision?

Strong Communities Create Healthier Rebels and a Stronger Movement

Extinction Rebellion has existed for over seven years! We know this work is a marathon and not a sprint. So we must take care to take meaningful action when we can and find joy and rest ahead of burnout.

Part of what makes us so resilient in this work is that we have fun while we do it! Creating spaces people want to be in and want to stay in is a big part of this. Building trust, finding ways to be creative, celebrating each other and looking after each other.

A lot of the tools we use to build community are essentially tools for building a safety network for ourselves and those around us. Isolation is a key factor in burnout and building connections and networks is a powerful way to mitigate this.

It is also important to note that through community we co-create safety for each other. This is especially important in trying times. We know that in extreme weather events it is the quality of the connections not the access to services that ensures survival.

> **Questions to Ask:**
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> - When have you felt most connected to community?
> - Who do you lean on in challenging times?
> - Who enables you to take meaningful action?
> - What does a thriving XR community look like?

Through Community Building We Generate Cultural Momentum To Meet Our Demands

We know that those in power are most afraid of us when they cannot spin our actions into a niche issue. When those on the street cannot be labelled as 'activists' but look like a cross section of society, that's when the government starts to get nervous.

Extinction Rebellion is at its core a community of action and hands down our strongest asset to empower people to take meaningful action is the community behind them.

This includes:

- Our Action Support teams that create safer spaces for actions to take place in and looks after those taking action.
- Our Arrestee and Legal teams and the wider community of support including CASP and RIPS who provide massive amounts of support for people taking action.
- Our Local Groups, Community Groups and any smaller networks of rebels who support each other through the network.

This is what community means for us.

> **Questions to Ask:**
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> - What makes you feel resourced and supported to take meaningful action?
> - How do we create space in the movement for many types of people acting in many different ways?
> - How do we create space where other communities can act in ways that matter to them?
