

# People's Assemblies

A people's assembly is a group decision making process usually taking around 30-45 minutes. It is to help weigh up pros and cons and make a joint decision. For instance, deciding whether to continue or change an action that is in progress.

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# Why Use People's Assemblies?

**Assemblies**, or participatory democracy processes, are structured ways for a group of people to discuss issues or make decisions collectively, so that all voices are heard and valued equally, and no one person or group dominates the discussion.

Extinction Rebellion uses participatory democracy processes, such as people's assemblies, in order to model participatory democracy within the movement, generate ideas, gather feedback and make decisions.

**People's assemblies** have a very different purpose, structure and process to **citizens' assemblies** (the central idea of our third demand) or to **community assemblies** (which are another form of participatory democracy XR promotes).

This grassroots method of self-organising during direct action is genuinely democratic and has been used throughout history to instigate people-powered change. People's Assemblies were at the centre of the Arab Revolt that spread from Tunisia to Egypt in 2011, as well as the Spanish 15M movement, the Occupy movement, and the Y En A Marre movement in Senegal, and they are central to the organisation of the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria.

Citizens, community and people's assemblies offer different ways for us to transform our democracy, as they offer a way of seeing democracy in action out on the streets or in a community and help people to reclaim power.

People's Assemblies can be part of the deep adaptation that communities have to go through in order to face the growing impact of climate and biodiversity breakdown.

## How can People's Assemblies be used?

### Organising and Decision Making

Groups of any size can meet and discuss issues or make decisions collectively in regards to moving the aims and actions of their group. This basic participatory democracy method can be used by local/national/regional/community groups or working groups/teams/circles to make emergency decisions or for decisions on how to organise themselves.

### Direct Action

Assemblies can form part of a direct action when they are held during occupations, roadblocks or other forms of peaceful civil disobedience involving groups of people holding spaces for any length of time.

# Designing questions

## What to discuss ?

This will depend entirely on the setting and framing of the Assembly and will often be on subjects which are most relevant to furthering the aims of the group.

An assembly agenda could be:

**Organise** - Set out the space for small group discussions or get people to sit in small groups

**The Question** - Present the question to be discussed, with a minimum of framing and expression of the purpose

**Decision Making** - Give time to the small groups to discuss the question and come up with an answer / solution / idea

**Feedback and Act** - Collate the results, define the general outcome with a seal of approval (wavy hands) and act on the results as appropriate

## Questions

The wording or framing of a question in a People's Assembly, or any assembly process, is incredibly important.

If the assembly is focusing on a proposal presented to a group for discussion, i.e. do we support the local independent MP, the question could be open, enabling discussion on ideas of how to facilitate support, or closed, with a simple yes / no answer. In most instances, the primary factor regarding the breadth and depth of the discussion is time.

In a group meeting, using a People's Assembly process to make a decision can take as long as is needed and may go through one or two rounds of discussion to bring out a group decision. Therefore the question can be one that encourages discussion, such as; are we able to assist in campaigning for the local independent MP or what capacity do we have to support the local independent MP.

These types of questions should encourage a broader range of discussion in the small groups. The results from those discussions can then be presented back to the whole group and the results that are most often repeated can then be used to formulate actions that fit those results. If appropriate, a second round of discussion can be used to pick one of the main points, to determine what to do to move the result forward or make suggestions on people, equipment or other facilities that may

be necessary in carrying out the chosen decision.

# Decision making

This is the deliberative phase of the process where the participants discuss how they feel about the question and try to come up with an answer, solution or way forward.

This phase is designed to enable **all voices to be heard and for those voices to be valued and respected**. People are given an equal amount of time to speak and they are listened to. They are not talked over and what they say, if it is agreed with or mirrored by the rest of or the majority of the group, may be presented to the whole group in the delivery of the results.

To achieve this, the small group discussion should be facilitated, preferably by a trained **facilitator**, and the discussion minuted by a **notetaker**. An agreed summary of the notes are then presented to the whole group at the end of the discussion period.

The primary aim of the group discussion is to answer the question and therefore the role of the facilitator is to ensure that everyone who wants to say something in respect to the question gets the opportunity to do so. The role of the notetaker is to write down the points of the discussion that get agreement from other members of the group. When everyone that wants to has spoken, the facilitator will run through the notes to get agreement that they are the points agreed.

If necessary, they can use one of a couple methods to narrow down the agreed points or, in the case of a closed question, ask for a confirmation vote on the group's decision. Either way, it is the role of the facilitator in these small group discussions to ensure that what the group presents represents the thoughts and feelings of the group. It is not their role to input into the discussion or try to direct the conversation in any direction, except for keeping it focussed on answering the question.

# Direct action or occupations

Depending on the size and duration of the protest and the level of police presence, these assemblies could potentially be a quick decision making assembly or a more in depth, multi layered assembly.

## A quick decision making People's Assembly

'the police have given us these options, what should we do?'.

In a situation where an extremely rapid decision is required there is no need to dispense with the assembly format. Many assemblies have been held on the streets to facilitate a decision making process with the police acting to clear the protest away. In all known cases, the assemblies have been able to finish their deliberation and in many cases, where they have been in the streets, they have been seen to be incredibly empowering and drawn and held the attention of passing members of the public. The process itself need only be simple, but the format should be the same - set people in groups, give them a question, give them a time limit to discuss it, gather the results and then act on the results. With clear communication, or even using the mic-check process, these kinds of assemblies can be run, from start to finish, in around 20 minutes. During a direct action protest, police liaison should be able to negotiate that time for a decision to be made on whether to stay or go, for instance. ).

## An in-depth decision making People's Assembly

At a protest or occupation, wherein there is no immediate time pressure, the People's Assembly process can be used to make decisions on what target to pick for an action or whether a non-vegan locally sourced option should be included on the menu, for example.

Where time allows, these broader assemblies can include the Testify element, which is an opportunity for participants to speak to the whole group about their feelings on the subject. This element can help to shape the discussion and helps to focus the assembly on a number of shared concerns. It also encourages other participants, who may not be willing to express their feelings to the whole group, to be more likely to express their feelings in the small group discussion, in turn helping to get a broader perception of the sentiments of the whole group in the final phase.

The rest of the process would follow that standard People's Assembly format, with small group discussions and feedback to decide on a response to the question.

## A full People's Assembly

These can form part of the outreach during an action or occupation, and can be designed to include members of the public, or include invitations to people from organisations or institutions that are being targeted or affected by the impacts of the target of the protest to come and participate in the process.

The subjects for discussion can relate directly to the target of the action, or can be more broad and inclusive such as 'how can we support each other in our communities in the face of climate breakdown?' or 'how can we help each other to face the grief that awareness brings?'

When people are invited to attend an assembly at a protest or occupation from outside of the movement they should be made aware of the potential consequence of that, but also be reassured that attendance at an assembly alone is very unlikely to result in any form of prosecution.

## Summary

People's Assemblies provide us with a process by which to move and act with immense flexibility as a large group during times of action or occupation. They allow for immediate changes and decisions to be made on the spot that enable us to act and react with speed and flexibility, whilst still being able to make those decisions collectively, and in large numbers.

They are the root of a lot of our internal meeting structures and decision making processes, having their own roots in protest movements and movements against the spread of harmful civilised perceptions of control for hundreds of years at least and provide a snapshot of the sort of community based democracy processes we will need to rely on in the future.





Photo by Ruth Davey

# How to Run a People's Assembly - Step-by-Step

This is the basic framework for creating and running a People's Assembly. This 'Quick Start Guide' is essentially all you need to run an assembly.

## Roles

Each assembly needs:

- Lead Facilitator(s). Ideally two with a gender balance. Responsible for the overall running of the assembly, time keeping, and the delivery of all relevant information.

Lead Facilitators would benefit from having completed [general XR Facilitation training](#). There are also recordings of People's Assembly specific training that can be found here:

[People's Assembly facilitation training one](#), or [People's Assembly facilitation training two](#).

- Assembly Note Taker. Responsible for recording the results of the Feedback phase of the assembly and responsible for feeding the assembly results into wherever they are destined to go.

Each breakout group needs:

- A Facilitator. Facilitates discussion using [hand signals](#), ensures no one dominates, keeps an eye on the time, maintains radical inclusivity and active listening.
- A Note Taker. Summarises the most popular points, ideally as bullet points. Aims to boil them down to a few key points or ideas from the discussion. Looks for wavy hands to signify agreement.

## Phases of a People's Assembly

There are three main phases of an Assembly: Setup, Deliberation and Integration (feeding back). Setup can be broken down further into Introduction and Input which can be of varying lengths depending on the purpose of the assembly.

Ideally the Setup phase should be no more than 30 mins in total. Unless it is an emergency assembly to make a rapid decision all assemblies should begin with something to unite all of those present.

# Phase 1: Introduction & Setup (approx 30 mins)

## Introduction

- Introduce and explain the **hand signals** so that they can be used throughout all parts of the assembly. - Lead Facilitators introduce the Assembly agenda, including where the results of this assembly will go.
- Talk through **the three pillars** and ask for help from the crowd to remove any barriers to engagement that may be identified.
- Read out the Inclusivity Statement:

We value all voices equally in the assembly, as the aim is to hear the wisdom of the crowd gathered here and not to have the assembly dominated by individual voices or groups. We recognise that confident speakers are not always right and that those who are not confident speakers will often have the most useful ideas or opinions to put into the discussion. This is why we value all voices equally and we ask you to do the same. We do not tolerate any calling out, abuse or shaming. We welcome all people but not all behaviours.

## Setup

This can be as simple as the Lead Facilitators framing the question for discussion and why the assembly has been convened, or asking the gathered crowd for suggestions as to what they would like to deliberate on (known as People's Choice). Or it can involve a longer and more in depth Input section such as a live panel of experts, or video input.

## Using People's Choice to Decide the Assembly Question(s)

Lead Facilitator asks for suggestions from the crowd on what they would like to discuss, and the Assembly Note taker records them. Ideally looking for three or four suggestions maximum or the process can be very long and drawn out! The crowd are then asked to vote using the 'Temperature Check' method. The Lead Facilitator reads them out one at a time and looks for the most 'Wavy Hand' signals to show the overall preference.

## Inviting participants to share why they are there

Invite people to take the microphone for two minutes maximum and share their feelings about what has brought them to join the assembly or action that day, to share what is in their heart. In an open public assembly, this section can be drawn out as long as people volunteer to speak. It opens the space for people to connect emotionally, but shouldn't be used as a 'soap box' on the issues about to be discussed. Ideally ask for a woman to speak first (it has been shown that this will greatly increase the level of engagement of female participants. The rate of engagement and uptake for males isn't affected in the same way), and allow as much dead air as is necessary for people to build up the courage to come and talk. Be strict with timing but ensure that people speaking are supported and made completely safe in their sharing. Ideally work with two facilitators so that one facilitator 'guards' mic, whilst one sits in front of speaker with timer and gives 'round up' hand signal as they approach 2 mins.

## Phase 2 : Deliberation (approx 40 mins)

**5 mins intro, 25 mins deliberation, 10 mins note feedback**

### Introducing the topic

- Lead Facilitator clarifies discussion topic or question, including making clear how many points are to be fed back from each 'breakout group' (usually between 3 and 5 depending on the size of the assembly).
- Lead Facilitators divide the assembly into 'breakout groups' ideally of between six to eight. Facilitators need to try and ensure this is roughly the size of each group and encourage people to sit in groups with people they don't already know.
- Each Breakout Group has one Facilitator and one Note Taker as explained above.
- Clarify duration of deliberation (discussion in breakout groups) phase and stick to timings throughout an assembly, as many people who are attending have work or family responsibilities that have to be respected.
- Recap hand signals here.

### Breakout Groups

- It is good practice for the Facilitator to restate the discussion topic or question and for the Note Taker to write it down. This enables people in the group to refer back to the original point for discussion to make sure the group stays focused and on subject.
- It is also good to start by going around the group and stating names, and making space for anyone to highlight any barriers to engagement that they may have that the small group can work together to try to work around.
- **Breakout Groups discuss topic for 25 mins.**
- 10 mins before end of Deliberation Phase
  - Lead Facilitator calls time for the end of the discussion time.
  - Note taker feeds back their summary of the discussion to identify the key points and agree with the group that the points they have recorded as most popular are an accurate representation.

## Phase 3: Intregation (approx 20 mins)

- Lead Facilitator calls assembly note takers to the front of the Assembly.
- Each Note Taker feeds back key points
- Crowd uses wavy hands to indicate support
- Assembly Note Taker records the points that get the most overall approval from the entire assembly, or just records the points as they are fed back. It's nice to do this on a white board or a large piece of paper so that the assembly participants can see it.
- If there is a need to vote on something as the results of the Assembly you can do a 'Temperature Check'. The Lead Facilitators reads out the different options to be voted on and the members of the assembly cast their 'vote' using 'wavey hands' for the option they like the best. The Assembly Note Taker and Lead Facilitators watch for the most wavy hands and that gets taken forward. [Read more about using an assembly to make a decision on a specific proposal here.](#)
- Assembly Note taker feeds results of the Assembly to wherever they are destined to go, such as central online results, or sent to Coordinators etc. This is determined prior to the assembly and will have formed part of the framing of the process in the Setup phase.

## Finishing up (approx 10 mins)

- Appreciation for Facilitators and Note Takers
- 'Shout Outs' are an invitation for those gathered to call out brief notifications such as upcoming actions or events. These should be short and arranged with the facilitators beforehand if possible.
- Lead Facilitator to summarise the results of the Assembly if necessary, and thank everyone for participating.

# Script for People's Assembly

Please note that this script is written in such a way as to ensure that those who are new to people's assemblies are fully supported throughout. If you are an experienced PA facilitator and are working with those who understand how PAs work, understand their history and the hand signals, you may wish to skip over certain sections. In short, please adapt this script to the needs of your situation and your audience.

## Input Phase

Facilitators can start by introducing themselves, perhaps say a little of your background and experience with PA's and Community Organising or Projects - Brief but inspiring! If you want to bring people into the space, perhaps do a short visioning exercise, inviting people to imagine something or think about what brought them to the space.

Then begin by explaining that People's Assemblies have three 'phases':

### **Input Phase**

During the input phase, we explain the process and structure of the assembly, we introduce the hand signals, and frame the focus of the assembly, as well as what will happen with the outcomes from the assembly.

[If you are having more input here than just presenting the topic for discussion, such as speakers, video etc you can explain that here too.]

### **Deliberation Phase**

During the Deliberation (discussion) phase, you will be placed in small groups for [insert chosen length of deliberation phase] minutes and discuss the question/topic of this assembly.

**Integration Phase** At the end of the Deliberation phase, the groups will come back into the full assembly and feedback what was generated in their small discussion group.

### **Facilitator 2: Hand Signals**

We use hand signals to facilitate a discussion in which all voices get heard, no one dominates and we don't speak over each other. We will outline the hand signals you will need to take part today. Don't worry if you can't remember them as they will be repeated later in the session. [As you verbally outline the hand signals, physically show them to ensure people fully understand them].

**Make a point:** One index finger pointed upwards. The facilitator will stack, but they can choose to stack out of order to ensure radical inclusivity and ensure all voices are heard.

**Agreement:** Wavy hands for agreement. This is to help note taker, who can record the level of agreement, and to make sure people are not interrupting others.

**Clarification:** Create a c shape with one hand. This is to ensure all are able to fully participate. It is useful if people do not understand anything, particularly important if unfamiliar terms and acronyms are used.

**Direct point:** Two index fingers pointing upwards. This is not for responding, this is just for extra added information that is directly relevant to what is being said – people must be careful not to misuse this to jump ahead in the queue!

**Technical point:** Create a t-shape with your hands. This is used for technical information such as breaks or timings.

**Round up:** Create a circle with both hands. Do this after 2 minutes to make sure that those who are more comfortable speaking don't go on and on.

**Speak up:** Move your hands upwards with their palms facing upwards.

**Temperature check:** Jiggle fingers at a level that corresponds with feelings i.e. upwards - support, horizontally - ambivalent, downwards - don't support. This can be used to quickly check the feelings of the group.

## **FACILITATOR 1: Introduce the concept of a People's Assembly**

### **What is a People's Assembly?**

A people's assembly is a structured way for a group of people to discuss issues, generate ideas and/or make decisions collectively in a manner in which all voices are heard and valued equally and no one person, or group, is able to dominate the process.

People's assemblies are 'self selected' meaning that anyone can choose to take part. They are not to be confused with Citizens Assemblies which are randomly selected from the population by the process of Sortition, to make sure it is representative in terms of key characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, education level and geography. Citizens' Assembly members would learn about critical thinking before they hear balanced information from experts and stakeholders. They would then spend time deliberating in small facilitated groups, similar to the break-out groups we're going to use in this People's Assembly.

People's Assemblies have been used throughout history and all over the world as a means to enable people to come together and achieve real social change:

- In Ancient Athens, for example, a people's assembly known as the ekklesia, which was open to all male citizens regardless of class, was where major decisions such as going to war, military strategy and the election of public officials were made.
- More recently, in Rojava, Kurdistan, people's assemblies have been at the centre of a democratic revolution. Decisions are made by the community, and the role of the elected representatives is simply to carry out these decisions. The community itself is the seat of power.
- In Spain, the Spanish municipalist movement, known as the Indignados or 15-M movement, used PAs to discuss and protest against the government's austerity policies.

At the movement's peak, 80 assemblies were being held each week alone in Madrid.

- In 2014 the Y'en a Marre movement in Senegal helped oust the incumbent and corrupt President by mobilising the youth vote using people's assemblies and hip-hop.
- Closer to home there are the examples of Frome, Torridge and others, all of which are councils that have been reclaimed to some degree by residents in local elections. When councils are run by residents we see decisions get made that prioritise the needs of that community. To give a couple of brief examples, Frome has a Library of Things. This came from a small start up grant of £9000, which enabled over 300 things such as power tools, musical instruments, to be gathered for the whole community to borrow for a small fee. They also repurposed derelict buildings, solar panels sprung up everywhere, a local NHS initiative to prescribe volunteering plus the councils investment in civic and volunteer groups, this led to a 22% reduction in A&E attendances.

## Inclusivity Statement

Before we start a People's Assembly, we like to read out this inclusivity statement

"We value all voices equally in the assembly, as the aim is to hear the wisdom of the crowd gathered here and not to have the assembly dominated by individual voices or groups. We recognise that confident speakers are not always right and that those who are not confident speakers will often have the most useful ideas or opinions to put into the discussion. This is why we value all voices equally and we ask you to do the same. We do not tolerate any calling out, abuse or shaming. We welcome all people but not all behaviours."

We want to hear your voice, if you want to speak, no matter what. Whatever age you are, wherever you are from and whatever you do.

The whole process will take about an hour and a half\*, and we'd love you to stay for the whole of that, but feel free to go or come as you like or need.

[\*If you have the time, it's good to do a TESTIFY at this point. It'll add about 15-30 minutes to the overall length of the PA, but gets people talking about why they are at the PA before the main section of the assembly...]

## Testify

Before we get into the section of the People's Assembly where you will all be able to talk through our specific issue in a facilitated way, we first like to give anyone who would like an opportunity to talk about what has brought them here today.

[Offer the floor to anyone who wants to speak. It can be good to ask for a woman to speak first as women tend to speak up less in these situations. Allow as much dead air as is necessary for people to build up the courage to come and talk!]

[FACILITATOR 2 is timing and doing the 'round up' signal as necessary. After 15-30 minutes, move into the remainder of the PA.]



## **FACILITATOR 2: The Three Pillars**

A people's assembly differs from debate where one person is 'right' and the other is 'wrong' and from the typical discussion or conversation where people have a tendency to dominate with questions and interjections. The assembly allows each participant to be heard with respect and full attention - and no judgement - whilst sharing from the heart and for each participant to get a turn.

It's ok not to actively share too. Witnessing the sharing of others' feelings and experiences is as important as expressing one's own.

In an assembly, the focus is on personal feelings and experiences. Each speaker is encouraged to say 'I' - rather than 'we' or 'they' whilst sharing with others.

**This can be encapsulated within the THREE PILLARS, which are:**

- **Radical Inclusivity:** Effective assemblies achieve radical inclusivity, where the emphasis on all being heard and valued equally means no voices are dominating and the collective wisdom of the assembly can be reached. People can participate safely and openly, without fear of judgement or ridicule. For those who often speak up in situations like this, think 'Wait! Why Am I Talking?' Try to say only what is needed.

[Radical Inclusivity also means being aware of potential barriers to engagement and working with those affected to enable participation. Think about disabled access, sign language, whisper interpretation for those for whom English isn't their first language and other possible means by which those barriers can be removed. Ask at the start of an assembly if there are any barriers to engagement that people need to identify and then request that the group work together to find ways to remove them.]

- **Active listening:** It is easy to start mapping out in your mind what your response may be while someone is still talking. Active listening is focusing on hearing someone all the way through before developing your responses. Assemblies are not an arena for intellectual jousting or point-scoring but a place that recognises that no one person or group holds all the answers and that through the wisdom of the crowds we achieve powerful intelligence about the core issues being discussed.
- **Trust:** We need to trust the process/facilitators/other participants. This is not a perfect system! It is only effective if we all trust the intentions of the people in the room - if we work in humility and accept that our ideas may not be the best ideas - and we work towards the best decision for everyone.

## **FACILITATOR 1: Framing the Topic - What is the aim of THIS people's assembly?**

### **Background**

[Frame your assembly here:

- Why has it been convened?
- What are the aims of this assembly?
- Where will the results of this assembly go and what legitimacy do they hold?
- Is it a decision making assembly? Is there a yes or no answer that needs to be generated?
- Is it to generate ideas or feedback? Where will these go and are they recommendations that will be acted upon or are they feeding into a wider discussion?]

### **Question(s)**

State your question or topic for discussion clearly here, and if possible write it up in the exact wording you use somewhere that will remain visible to all participants throughout the assembly.

Always ask for any clarifications at this point, and be open to working to reword the question/topic if needed you can ask for a 'temperature check' here to make sure the assembly agrees with the proposed wording.

A good question is worded in accessible language, not too long, and is broad enough to allow for free discussion, but not so broad that a structured conversation around it is difficult. Likewise a very specific question won't generate a very diverse response.

For example, if you would like to engage people around the topic of buying local produce, you might ask:

- 'Should we start a Food Hub?'
  - This question is very narrow, and really requires a yes or no, so it is unlikely to generate a lot of great ideas.
- 'How can we improve access to local produce?'
- 'What can we do to reduce food miles?'
  - This question is broader, still focused on local access, gives scope for creativity.
- 'What can we do to reduce food miles?'
  - Too broad, this could encompass all manner of different approaches and likely to lead to the conversation jumping from local to regional to national issues.

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## **Deliberation Phase**

### **FACILITATOR 2: How does a People's Assembly work?**

You will discuss the PA question in breakout groups of 8-10, then feedback to the entire assembly.

Each group needs a facilitator and a note taker:

- It is the role of the facilitator to ensure that all voices are heard (radical inclusivity). To do this, allow two minutes per statement (maximum) and if people go over, give them the

round up symbol.

- It is the role of the note taker to make notes on what is discussed, and to share their group's key points of discussion in the integration phase i.e. when all of the groups have returned to the assembly.
- When the note-taker is taking notes, they can do so in bullet points for ease of recording. Try to capture exactly what someone means, rather than adding any personal interpretations.
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10 minutes before the end of your allocated time, the note-taker should summarise the group's notes, then use temperature checks to identify the points that have the most support or acceptance.

The group should then work together to reach agreement on the main points to feed back to the Assembly.

[Decide how you want the feedback to happen- select the most appropriate option depending on size of group/time available:

- We would like the notetaker to share the top 3 points with the whole assembly after we reunite as an assembly.
- We would like the notetake to share 1 sentence or 10 words to the whole assembly.
- We would like 3 key points delivered in writing.]

GOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

**Discussion [25 mins or whatever your allocated time is]**

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## Integration/Output Phase

### **FACILITATOR 1: Ending**

#### **Feedback (15 minutes)**

Remember to get the names of the people giving feedback, and show appreciation.

Thank everyone for participating. Then explain what will happen to the results of the assembly, including any possible 'next steps' that people could take, or plans for further assemblies.

[At this point you can offer space for 'shout outs' - 'Shout Outs' are an invitation for those gathered to call out brief notifications such as upcoming meetings or events. These should be short and arranged with the facilitators beforehand if possible. This should take no more than 10 mins]

Close the assembly and ideally let everyone know when the next assembly will be if appropriate.

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# Tips for Dealing with Difficult Interactions

**A collection of thoughts and ideas on how to approach difficult interactions and behaviours. Remember that arguments can be won by the loudest voices, you are hear to ensure that everyone gets heard.**

- Stress that “we welcome all people, but not all behaviours”.
  - Move in when people are interjecting, challenging or talking too much.
  - “The points you are making are really interesting and important but it is also important to hear from other people here.”
  - “There is always a danger that we only hear from the most confident voices - let’s make sure that we also hear from the people who haven’t spoken so far.”
  - “I am conscious of time and our agenda - what is the final point you want to make?”
  - “Remember radical inclusivity - we want time for everyone.”
  - “It’s important for people to feel listened to without interrupting.”
  - You can offer to talk to people in more detail in a break or afterwards. If you need someone to behave differently it can be an expression of Radical Inclusion to connect with them in a break or afterwards to keep in relationship with them.
  - Sometimes with someone who is very unconsciously in need of attention and can’t be satisfied with a short interaction, avoiding eye contact may keep them quiet or let them know they have been talking for too long.
  - If necessary, overtly clarify the objectives of the session again and what is needed to achieve those objectives.
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## Tips for Online Assemblies

### Before the Meeting: Setting up Zoom

Under **my meetings**, click on the meeting you are facilitating. On the left you will see **settings**. Make sure the following are selected:

- Start meetings with participant video on. Participants can change this during the meeting.
- Automatically mute all participants when they join the meeting. The host controls whether participants can unmute themselves.
- Allow meeting participants to send a message visible to all participants in the chat.
- Automatically save all in-meeting chats so that hosts do not need to manually save the text of the chat after the meeting starts.
- Allow the host to add co-hosts. Co-hosts have the same in-meeting controls as the host.
- Participants in a meeting can provide nonverbal feedback and express opinions by clicking on icons in the Participants panel.
- Allow host to split meeting participants into separate, smaller breakout rooms.
- To reduce risk of strangers showing inappropriate material in your Zoom Room only permit hosts and co-hosts to share their screens; and do not permit use of virtual backgrounds, as this too is another way trolls can project material into the room.

Laptops are best for online Zooms, but it can be done on smartphones too. **Facilitators need to be on Laptops.** Ask people who have used Zoom before to sign in 5 minutes before the start time, and those who have not used Zoom before to sign in 10 minutes early and work out how to use the buttons on the screen.

## Online Deliberation

For this phase online, the Technical Facilitator should be logged in as the Host. They can then select '**Breakout Rooms**' on the control panel. Divide the number of participants in the assembly by number of people you would like in each group and Zoom will automatically assign them to groups. Get a few friends and give this a try before your People's Assembly!

Once everyone is ready, the Technical Facilitator can go to 'manage participants' and unmute everyone in preparation for discussion, and then send them out into breakout groups.

You can use '**Breakout Rooms- Broadcast**' to give timing reminders to all groups during the discussion.

When the discussion time is up, you can click 'close groups' and this will give breakout groups 1 minute before they are returned to the main group (you can change this in Breakout Room settings if you want to).

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[Downloadable Script for People's Assembly](#)