

Gearing up for a changed world: The Bridge

Healthy societies are based on the value of caring not only for yourself or protecting your own, but caring about everyone.

Fear and scarcity based beliefs are perpetuated within the current system of governance, which is widely recognised to be too easily corrupted. Weaving a fabric of collectivity through society means resisting but also building; building communities and rebuilding common values.

A culture of Community: XR sees community empowerment and resilience as the best available long term solution to political failure in meeting the challenge of the crises we face. But community as a foundational principle needs to become an embedded culture, and requires building not just shared experiences but practices purpose-designed to bridge divides.

Building the bridge to a new culture at the community level means identifying what underlies the type of culture we aspire to, and developing practices within XR that can be brought to groups outside it.

Basic human connection has a power and a magic all its own, and is able to do incredible things like bridge divides, lessen loneliness, build empowerment. In our world real connection has become hard to come by. Social media and a tendency to find 'tribes' are now standing in for the deeper community relationships that are being lost. The approach of normalising activation needs to start with humanising it; just as no one should be expected to face the impacts of crises alone, no one should be expected to confront their causes alone.

Learning from successful community experiments and from Indigenous culture teachings, common characteristics emerge, that can be used as the basis for process and practice design.

10 Characteristics of a healthy and resilient community

Proximity

Collective recognition that simply being together will bridge many divides, that opportunities to experience genuine togetherness must be created if they are not inherent in daily life.

Shared values and Prized values

Value is now taught as attributed to achievement or status. A healthy culture would mean a community that assigns the highest value to the exercise of kindness, empathy and care.

The Community consists of all living beings, we are all part of the natural world

Treating all life as worthy of care and respect, and inseparable from each other.

Community Belonging

Recognising everyone belongs or no one does. In a community, all members are not just valued, but given voice.

Active and Direct Participation in Decision-making

Recognising the dangers of not participating or participating through remote proxies.

Sharing and Connection

The need for continuous checking in with each other must extend beyond proximity into practices that actively facilitate connection and sharing.

Trust building over time

Committing to processes and practices that takes time.

Practices and Tools to deal with disagreement and conflict

Accepting conflict will occur, but being accountable for our own part in it.

Resource sharing

Hoarding of resources is commonly deterred through cultural norms and peer pressure.

Circular production and consumption where possible

Understanding where all resources and goods start, not just end.

As XR groups shift focus to coalition building and community bases of power, the objective is to build empowerment together, but it must be built on a foundation of genuinely bridging divides.

XR will face two key challenges in this work:

- Upholding our Principles and Values, and Ways of Working
- Ensuring other groups become more open to active resistance

The new approach of coalition building will not be successful if other groups are not brought into a culture of resistance and closer to NVDA. We must design pathways that are premised on empowerment and community connection. Building strong foundations means ensuring sustained relationships but also the strength to face the coming transitions.
