The Approach

Of all the ways the public encounters the crisis – whether it's through news stories or nature documentaries, political attention or extreme weather events – nothing but sustained mass protest was found to leave a long-lasting impact on people's will for politicians to act.

But it's important not to measure long term success by numbers mobilised or increased awareness.

We exist to drive genuine and radical change, and will settle for nothing less.

We've identified that, catalysed by protest, change comes from cultural tipping points, a moment when it becomes clear to the powerful that cultural momentum is on our side. This means not just more people coming into resistance, but a wider variety of people.

And how do we ensure we can attract that genuinely wider spectrum?
With a strategy of resonance, and invitation.

We aim to make XR inviting by delivering or supporting actions both locally and nationally that prioritise resonance. Resonance isn't just about the issue chosen to highlight, it's also about tone. It means adopting messaging and comms that show us beyond the stereotypes or social labels. It means bringing forward a sense of humour, care for family, struggles of daily life. Things that are universal, and touch a nerve in all of us.

The issues matter too. Locally, communities are threatened by sewage dumping, incinerators or new mining projects proposed, HS2, airport expansions, and all the other examples of unnecessary destruction or degradation of nature, water and air.

Choosing targets like these helps to activate communities to build the local coalitions we need. Using resonance and invitation enhances our chances of a wider spectrum of support. Local groups will know best which issues will resonate most in their communities, and which will provide opportunities to illustrate to new groups the increased power accorded by NVDA.

This does not mean making a beeline for small 'c' Conservatives and the organisations they belong to. Equally it doesn't involve simply expanding out to include other progressive campaigns. The ultimate target audience is the silent majority, those who don't consider themselves political at all. Ordinary people, who don't identify with politics, and are not involved in campaigning. When we begin to build support beyond the world of activism, we will be on the verge of a critical turning point.

The common thread is disempowerment; the political system being unable to serve our needs or the common good. The political system forcing its distorted and corrupted priorities onto our communities. We see it everywhere, in all aspects of our lives. A culture of activation means we will no longer accept it.

The Big One's target, Westminster, was ultimately to achieve these aims: we did not expect change from this government, it is the public we were speaking to, by using a universal symbol of everything that is wrong and that is failing.

XR’s place in a wider ecology of movements is to demonstrate the necessity for radical action and civil disobedience. In January we said, “As we ring in the new year, we make a controversial resolution to temporarily shift away from public disruption as a primary tactic”, since then we have welcomed a wide coalition of groups and a healthy dose of new rebels. Bringing new people into active participation does not mean we move away from a willingness to face arrest. Indeed many of our rebels are still facing court cases and possible prison sentences.

Prioritising those actions with targets and tactics that resonate with the public, allows us and them to experience a feeling of common ground, bridging the artificial separation (and othering) the media seek to maintain. But this does not mean no disruption or even no public disruption. It simply means we should aim for the main impact of our actions to fall squarely on chosen targets as much as possible. We aim first and foremost to swell numbers, taking new people on the journey into empowerment and direct action, and knit the new, much wider movement together, from those on bail through to those taking their first step on their first ever march.

National-scale actions for local groups will be offered and supported by UK central circles, including guidance, resources, advice, training and an action strategy to build power in local groups and communities.

The wider ecosystem of nonviolent resistance involves multiple strategic approaches. XR has proven our potential to act as a conduit for convening collective action. We now have a responsibility to take people along a journey of NVDA.

Some will go all the way to civil disobedience, many won’t. But together, we will build the power to break the status quo.
