

# THE MAKING OF:



A set of evaluation notes in case we ever want to plan another festival like it.



## **NOTES ON THIS GUIDE.**

*This has been written up as a set of notes to purpose as a guide to creating an outreach event in the form of a festival for Extinction Rebellion. We acknowledge that we are far from experts and that what we did is not the only way to do thing. What worked for Amsterdam, might not work for Rotterdam, Tilburg or Wageningen. We may have got a lot wrong and upset people. But we also heard that people really enjoyed the festival and wanted to ask us questions about some of the details of putting on a festival.*

*We unceremoniously got together and put together these notes on a tired Friday night in the week after the festival. Maybe they will serve to be useful, so here goes...*

*Have a clear set of aims. Checking proposals for the festival against the aims helps find consent for programme proposals and for other decisions (such as financing... more on this later).*

## **AIMS OF THE FESTIVAL**

- To build the movement in anticipation of the Spring Rebellion
- To forge and strengthen links with other movements
- To celebrate the community of XR NL and XR Amsterdam and it's many talents!
- To train and capture new rebels
- To develop knowledge of existing rebels

## **ROUGH TIMELINE:**

12 weeks before:

- Build a core team
- Start a mattermost channel!
- Find a venue, get the costs and check for dates
- Start inquiring for potential interest for the programme
- Do targeted call-outs for people to join the programme and select specific groups (scientists, arts, regen, other movements)
- Do an open call too! But don't promise to put them on the programme... not everything will fit the aims of the festival
- Reach out to other circles

8 weeks before:

- Announce the festival
- Party planning! (If you intend that to be part of the festival)
- Design and look of festival is create for promo/marketing
- Send in a budget request (can be found on the Finance circle channel on Mattermost)

4 weeks before:

- Majority of programme in place!
- Release of block programme (with some gaps if need be) so people can imagine their day or weekend at your festival
- Social media templates and people in place
- Begin to assemble a bigger volunteer team for all aspects of the festival
- Have a team in place to take on parts of the programme or venues to continue the contact with speakers/trainers etc.

2 weeks before:

- Social media posts begin leaking programme details
- Schedule volunteer briefings
- Finalise access times for the venue
- List and obtain all items needed for logistics

## Week before:

- Volunteers to make final contact with all speakers, trainers, cake makers, party people, drivers, chair people, tea people, kitchen, venue, story tellers, poets and dancers... make sure they are ok and have the final details
- Greater social media presence. Maybe 2 posts a day of different styles. The social media team should be on this.

## On the day:

- Turn up well rested with a good nights sleep behind you
- Enjoy yourself...
- Put up all the printed materials and street signs
- Take photos
- Let volunteers run the venues
- Ensure there is a team in place to help build-up the festival
- Make sure everyone contributing to the festival feels valued

## Afterwards:

- Thank everybody!
- Gather and publish pictures, video, etc.
- Fix the budget
- Make sure everything went good with your partners
- Debrief (unceremoniously)
- Chill!

## **PROGRAMMING**

- Allocating areas helps! Find people to lead on arts, regen, training (outreach), poetry, music or whatever your main programme domains are.
- Don't underestimate the amount of quality, friendly communication needed! It's more time consuming to use softer, less direct language in communication and people you are contacting will not be thinking about your list of 60 people to email.
- Don't be scared to say no to a proposal if it does not fit in with the aim of mobilising, movement building or building links with other movements. People have some great skills to share, but not all niche areas will fit your festival aims.
- Build some logic into the programme sequence: it works well to have scientific and concentration heavy talks earlier in the day. And randomly jumping between types of talks can be difficult.
- Think about having a balance of social time and areas available throughout the day
- Consider the appropriate language of the talks and trainings. A balance is needed, depending on the region and audience.
- Allow times for Questions and Answers and over-runs/breaks between the sessions!
- Finalise the programme as soon as possible and release the block-programme
- Sign-up forms for workshops can be done through event-brite to keep up to date numbers and set maximum participant numbers for limited space workshops/trainings. Google Forms or other sites are also useful for this.
- Have photos and technical specifications of the space ready to pass on to speakers/performers/musicians/DJs. This will help them plan their contribution to the programme.

*This is one of the biggest considerations of the festival and really sets the tone and possibilities of the festival. This will be unique to each festival, so there is no advice on what to choose. But on what is worth considering.*

## **VENUE**

- Accessible venues mean that no rebels are excluded
- Wardrobe facilities help to keep areas free and easy to move through with safety already considered... we sometimes have a lot of stuff with us!
- Lots of spaces help with programming. Don't be afraid to book a venue with 4, 5 or more spaces to use... this will help with the diversity of the programme and ensure that you still have chill out areas.
- Refreshments (tea / coffee) facilities can really help if they are available. This can be externally organised otherwise, but will need someone to run in during the day if the team at the venue cannot help with it. Note that at the Rebel Festival, the team at De Peper helped with the tea and coffee and were involved with the decision making on how best to set this up.
- Venues can help advise where to find extra chairs if they do not have enough seating. Many venues need lots of detail about how the space will be used and changed during the day if they are managing this. Not being ready with this information might make you seem unprofessional and untrustworthy - many are precious about who comes into *their* space!
- Have details ready! The venue we contacted needed a lot of details to give us a price (wardrobe or not, how many people, exact timeline, outreach means...). Be as precise as possible in your proposal to facilitate the discussion

*Consider that everyone is a volunteer!*

## **VOLUNTEERS**

- Sign up volunteers and consider fully all the information you will need (name, email, number, things they are interested in doing)
- Have jobs ready in the run up and during the day on a board or notebook in case anyone asks what they can help with. This can help get a lot done.
- Don't try to do everything yourself... if something is stressful, then ask for help. It's XR, people will jump in!
- Plan for all the different types of volunteers needed: people who can operate lights on club nights, stage managers if you have performances, people to sit on a info desk, people who can drive and move things at the end of the festival, people to manage venues in shifts, contact a section of people involved in the programme before the festival.

## **FINANCE**

- If the festival is a celebration of the community of XR then don't pay anyone! This is a difficult area, but we decided that if XR Amsterdam couldn't offer something from the community of people interested in supporting the movement, then it couldn't be on the programme. Though we understand that artists, speakers and others need to make a living, there are other spaces and festivals for those speakers and events.
- Make a budget sheet! And take time to throughout the festival to update it and keep it clean, it will save you a bit of stress in the end.
- We did not reimburse travel costs! For similar reasons to above, there is no hierarchy in XR and so no rebel should be paid to attend a local event more than any other. Or at least this was our thinking for the Rebel Festival and we stuck to it.
- Donations will not cover much of the costs. This event will likely need to achieve big outreach and need to be funded by XRNL. Don't worry about profit. If this trains rebels and builds the movement, then finance can consider it's cost and work as part of the movement.
- Decide how donation jars will be placed and who is looking after money.



## FOOD AND DRINK

- Numbers are difficult to calculate accurately without running out of food or having waste. So plan with this in mind, we had sign-ups and then if it was full - it was full!
- Vegan food is the most inclusive type of food.
- We were happy to ask rebels to pay between 7-10 EUR for a dinner which was vegan and organic.
- If someone else can handle the dinner and catering and knows what they are doing, that is essential!
- Crowd source your cakes for your coffee and tea! Do a call-out and get people to bring this in. Ensure this is OK with the venue in advance.
- People get through a lot of coffee and tea!

## PARTY

- Make plans according to the skills you have available. If someone knows how to run a club night, then that's great. And if someone knows how to run simple lights, a smoke machine and karaoke box - then that's the right thing to happen!
- Commercial DJs have expectations about communication, lighting, sound and other venue arrangements. It really helps to have someone know what they are doing if the intention is a club night. We did not pay any DJs for their attendance or travel. The arts community is generally supportive of climate movements and want to help us!
- This has to be separate to the financing of the day! XR cannot pay for any part of the festival which is a party. Split this in the budget.
- The party at the Jan 2020 Rebel Festival was able to cover its own costs and make a profit. From this we ensured we supported the venues who had donated the use of their spaces for the festival and thus ensured those relationships were well looked after for future. We need to support the spaces which support us!

## **SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROMO**

- Get two people to take this on entirely. It's a busy role to ensure that all the hard work planning translates to people turning up!
- Be inclusive in communication: use social media but also the XR newsletter, the blog, posters and flyers, announces at different events...
- Set up template posts and drip feed the programme content
- Social media posts can also announce festival planning milestones so people are aware what is happening
- Promote the event within the movement! It can be mentioned in meetings within XR.
- Posts on the day are a nice way of celebrating what is happening.
- Don't forget to target potential new rebels!
- A blog with the programme info can be free and easy to set up.
- A postering team can help with local outreach and promo... this brings more people into the event. You need to reach widely!

## **LOGISTICS**

- Have the following spares ready: a beamer, A4 paper, big paper, markers, 3-4 masking tape including low-stick masking tape so you don't damage walls, pens, scissors, craft knife
- Plan for the build-up and build-down of the festival. When can you get in to set up? Can you get the in the day before? Is there a safe space for a back-office where you keep valuables for a small team? Or to rest up?
- Book a van or car and place to take stuff after the festival. This is essential. We always have a lot left after.
- Book a de-brief and nice dinner a few days after all your hard work!
- Its more sustainable for volunteers to run spaces rather than the core team. You will likely be needed to be on hand to manage crisis situation throughout the weekend or day.

## PRINTED MATERIAL

- If you intend to print the block-programme for people attending, then book the printing of this for 1-2 days before the festival. Letting the printers know in 2 weeks in advance that you will need this printing. They can book the job and make sure that the latest and most up to date version is printed for smoother running of the festival
- The block-programme intentionally does not show logistical information about building up or down venues, run over time and Q&A time. The block programme is public facing and helps obscure run over times.
- Print a HUGE (A0!) programme for people attending to look at. Or make one using chart paper... this will help with updates as they come.
- Print signs for donations to XR (every little helps), sign-up links to volunteer as a rebel or to receive the newsletter, a list of the upcoming meets, a set of values and principles and also stickers for volunteers so people know who can help them.
- Print detailed programme info for each venue space and stick it outside so people don't disturb what is happening inside when they get curious and want to know what is happening! And print an extra set!

## FILES AND CONTACT

Check the Cloud space under Arts > Other > Rebel Festival for some key files we used for planning.

Contact through mattermost: @adil-j, @ camillemiellca, @freija if you have more questions. Or through the Amsterdam Arts Circle.

### REMEMBER:

*Whoever comes are the right people.*

*Wherever it happens is the right place.*

*Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.*

*We're not even meant to be here, doing this, but we are and it's pretty fucking amazing whatever happens!*