Recommendations for organising and facilitating an XR group

Introduction

We want to strike a balance between the need to act fast in rapid-changing situations and the wisdom which comes from collective feedback during deeper decision-making processes.

These recommendations can be useful to apply and can be expanded and elaborated as your circle develops.

Foundations

Only use l**arger-group decisions** when **absolutely necessary**, as in many cases this is **not the most efficient method** to make decisions. Instead, work on decentralizing decisions to individuals in clear roles with written mandates to empower individuals to make decisions, while ensuring accountability.

Two suggested general working principles:

- only make decisions with the people **potentially interested/impacted** rather than in whole group meetings/zooms. This means sub-groups/working groups bringing already discussed and honed proposals to the wider group as far as possible

- **Review the process and trust issues in your circle** if, after a few months, most people still feel that they should be part of most decisions. It can be a process - in the sense that the group just hasn't clarified the decision-making processes yet. It can also be a symptom that the group has not yet fully created a culture of trust and security with each other. If that is the case, look at how social power systems can reproduce themselves in the group: look for example at who is being listened to and why (gender, racial bias, class, etc.). A common thread is that we tend not to notice that we have a certain power, e.g. a non-disabled person who does not have to think about whether a

proposed location is wheelchair accessible. Equally important is socializing: for example, meeting earlier and eating together, or starting earlier with a zoom and checking in longer. The more transparency there is about what is being done by whom, the easier it will be to work together.

Roles within groups

It is recommended that groups **define roles** within their team in order to avoid confusion about who does what, make this easily available online and where possible always ask new participants to read it before participating in their first meeting.

Groups define their own internal roles, each of which can be filled by one or more people. These roles have clearly defined mandates that allow the holder(s) of that role to make autonomous decisions.

[Here you can find examples of roles we use in XR Netherlands.](#)

Different forms of decision making

When a role has a mandate: The role holder defines the decision-making process around an issue covered by their mandate

When an issue is not covered by a specific mandate: The facilitator of the meeting decides which process to use, such as simply finding agreement among group members, voting, formal consensus or others.

Defining roles and mandates

In order to add a new role or a new mandate, or amend an existing mandate, a person within the group must make a **proposal** at a group meeting. There should then be a round of clarifying questions and reactions, followed by an opportunity for the proposer to amend the proposal on the basis of these questions/reactions. Finally, a round of objections to the proposal is heard before a decision can be taken.

It is also possible to make additions/changes to roles and mandates between meetings, when all relevant group members have had an opportunity to give their feedback.

A similar process can be followed when defining sub-group mandates within a working group.

Meetings

Recommended format:

- **Set a hard stop to the meeting**: a time when people don't have to stay, usually the end of the formal meeting.
- **Check-in:** Briefly share how you feel emotionally at the beginning of the meeting.

  Part of the reason for this is to help shift what can often become the standard culture of activism. What we strive for is often called regenerative culture, or sustainable activism. Check-ins are a small way to practice regenerative culture.

  At the same time it has to be acknowledged that people have very different levels of comfort when checking in. It is possible that not everyone in the group is equally familiar with talking to each other in this way, they may not have the same level of emotional openness or security, and they may not be neurotypical. So keep this in mind.

- **Information sharing**:
    - Project updates
    - Status of main recurring actions/issues
    - Important key data or metrics

  Do not allow discussion during this step, add it to the agenda if necessary

  To whatever extent is doable, send this out in writing beforehand, so that one-way info sharing can be as brief and efficient as possible.

- **Process each agenda item one by one**, don't mix them up.
- **Closing round**: similar to the check-in at the beginning

It is recommended to **write minutes** and publish them in our cloud, and to clearly **record all action points** so that everyone can see them. It is also advisable to put a project board at the top of the minutes, listing all members of the project group who are working on these things. Many of our groups use Trello for this.

A useful tip for the facilitator of the meeting is to determine the duration of each item on the agenda. This helps the group to keep a hard stop and helps the facilitator to keep the conversations short and efficient.