**USEFUL NOTES FOR ORGANISING A REGIONAL GATHERING!**

So, you want to organise an XR gathering! Awesome! It might be local, national, or across different countries. This doc will provide a template and some useful things to remember when organising the gathering. It’s just a framework, but hopefully will answer any questions folks have. If you still have any queries, you’re welcome to drop a message to art-ran-19 on Mattermost.

**WHAT IS THE GATHERING FOR?**It’s important that everyone in the organising team has a shared understanding of the intention behind the gathering. Is it an opportunity for different rebels to meet, get to know one another, and organise some regen trainings? Or is it a more focused skillshare weekend with facilitation and NVDA training? Once this is clear, it will be much easier to plan the workshops and timetable.

**WHEN IS THE GATHERING?**Depending on the size and intention behind the gathering, the timing can be important. Some initial dates can be proposed, and then folks can check that they don’t clash with any other important dates (e.g. a national gathering of an XR group or a climate camp).

**HOW LONG DO WE NEED TO ORGANISE THE GATHERING?**It depends on many things, such as:
 - The size of the organising team
 - the amount of people attending
 - how long the gathering is
 - allowing time for advertising the gathering and processing responses

Two or three months before the date may seem early, but there is no harm in having it organised in advance. It’s also much easier and relaxing to have everything sorted a couple of weeks before the gathering starts. This means all the main logistics (location, food, travel, accommodation etc) can be finalised and you have time to deal with any issues, changes or problems in those final weeks.

**WHO IS IN THE ORGANISING TEAM?**It’s good to keep track of who can help with organising, and try to meet on a weekly or bi-monthly basis in the run up to the gathering.Often, the best teams function with 6-8 people. You can decide on roles, and the best way of contacting one another (e.g. Signal or Mattermost), and a group setting where everybody can chat together, such as a private Mattermost chat. It’s useful to have an internal coordinator who can keep track of the planning document.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Role** | **Contact** | **Preferred platform** | **Where are you based?** |
| XXX | Internal coordinator, managing accommodation | 123-456-789 | Signal | Venus |
| YYY | Organising food | 123-456-789 | Mattermost | Mars |
| ZZZ | Organising workshops | 123-456-789 | Signal | Jupiter |
| VVV | Organising workshops | 123-456-789 | Mattermost | Uranus |

To ensure that each area is covered, and work isn’t duplicated, it’s useful for the team to note down all of the responsibilities, and then delegate to members of the group. These tasks can be noted in the table above. The group members can update each other at the weekly meetings, but the meetings are also a good place for folks to say if they are struggling and need support trying to organise something. That’s the point of working in a team! Don’t be afraid of saying if you need help.

Some of the main areas to cover might be:
- **Venue**: how many people can the space hold and is it accessible to everyone?

-**Food**: will an external caterer be used or will folks cook together?

-**Accommodation**: will folks be hosted by local rebels or will there be accommodation available?

(If being hosted by local rebels, two separate questionnaires might need to be sent out before: one to find hosts and one for rebels attending to check any needs/preferences and dates available)

-**Travel:** will there be reimbursement for travel? If so, how much? Sometimes folks offer a percentage, or pay after a certain amount, e.g. anything over €50 (can be more/less depending on location & size of gathering)

-**Workshops:** what type of workshops would suit the gathering? Try and look for a range of folks to run the workshops, from different backgrounds, ages and with a gender balance

**WHAT WOULD THE TIMETABLE LOOK LIKE?**

It’s important to stay focused and not offer too much. Folks will want to enjoy the workshops, chat to other rebels, and not have to hurry from one workshop to the next. Breaks are also very important as gatherings can be tiring! There might be lots of new faces, new information and many rebels might be in a place they’ve never visited before.

It’s useful to start with a list of the different potential workshops, then incorporate it into a timetable once they are confirmed.

Here is an example for a timetable to organise the workshops. Depending on the gathering, you may want more or less workshops and to change the timings. Rebels attending might want to offer impromptu workshops or discussions, so try and find a space where these can be advertised.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Time** | **Title** | **Description** | **Lead by** | **Where?** |
| 9.30 -10am  | Group Welcome & Check-in |  | Morning facilitators | Main hall |
| 10 -11.30am | Workshop 1 | Description of the workshop | Who is leading this workshop? | Garden... |
|  | Workshop 2 |  |  |  |
| 11.30 - 12 noon | - BREAK -  |
| 12-1.30pm | Workshop 3 |  |  |  |
|  | Workshop 4 |  |  |  |
| 1.30 – 3pm | - LUNCH -  |
| 3 – 4.30pm | Workshop 5 |  |  |  |
|  | Workshop 6 |  |  |  |
| 4.30 - 5pm | - BREAK -  |
| 5 – 6.30pm | Workshop 7 |  |  |  |
|  | Workshop 8 |  |  |  |
| 6.30pm | Group Check-out & Dinner |
| 8pm | - MUSIC?! -  |

**DO WE NEED FACILITATORS?**It’s likely that many people won’t have met before. The morning check-ins are a great way of getting folks chatting with one another, and getting ready for the day.
It’s useful to have a few facilitators (depending on how many folks attending). Their role will be to:

- ensure folks stick to the timetable as much as possible
- facilitate the check-ins and check-outs
- remind folks when a session is about to end (~10 mins before)
- remind folks when a break/lunch/dinner is about to end and the next session begin (~10 mins before)

If the group is too big to have a whole-group go-around of names and check-ins in the morning, then folks can break into smaller groups, or pairs, and ask each other a few questions. Facilitators might want to introduce some other activities into the morning check-in such as questions to ask one-another or some stretches!

It’s useful to have folks who have some experience on facilitation and working with large groups. Facilitation can be tiring, and they might be doing other roles, so folks might want to take morning and afternoon shifts.

**HOW DO REBELS FIND OUT ABOUT THE GATHERING?**[♥](https://fsymbols.com/emoticons/) At the beginning, once the date and location has been decided it’s useful to share a post outlining**:**- what the gathering is for
- when it will be
- a contact address for anyone who wants to help or run a workshop

This should be shared well in advance of the date of the gathering.

[♥](https://fsymbols.com/emoticons/) Once the workshops and accommodation has been decided, another post or funky looking poster could be created with more details about:
 - the actual location
 - the accommodation, any travel reimbursement and food
 - a contact address for any questions

It’s likely that the workshops will take a while to organise, but try and send all the attendee rebels a version of the workshop timetable before they attend, so they know what’s going on!

Note down the different communication channels that these posts will be shared on (e.g. Mattermost, email) and through which networks (local or regional organisers).

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Hopefully this document has been useful! Things will always change and issues will come up, as long as team members keep communicating with one another, issues can normally get sorted. Every gathering will be different, so use as much of this document as you want. It’s just a guideline, not an instruction manual :)