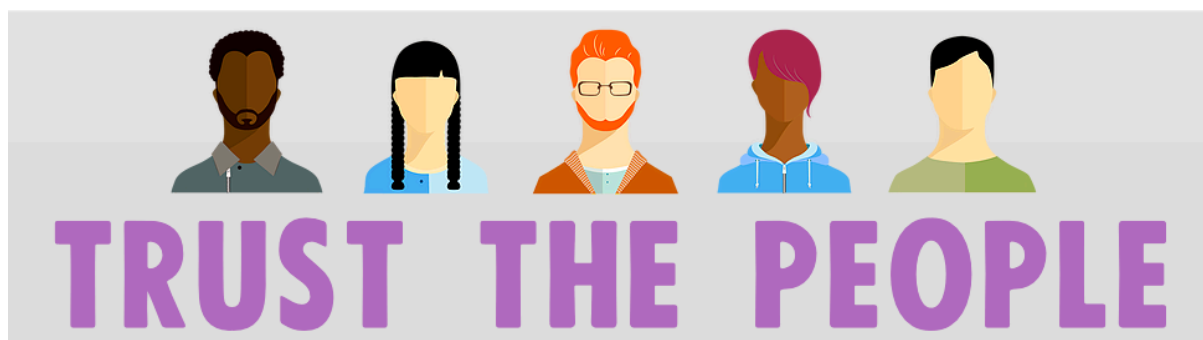




Trust The People - Programme Overview

What Is the Trust the People Programme?

The Trust the People programme contains a range of resources, including workshops, activities and readings, which are all about promoting community democracy. The programme seeks to enable people to connect with those in their local communities and build foundations of trust; to teach people about people's assemblies, a powerful form of deliberative democracy that ensures everyone has the chance to be heard, and that can lead to mass collective action and campaigning; and to help people organise effectively in their communities to create lasting change that ensures everyone's needs are met. It was born in Extinction Rebellion's Future Democracy Hub but has been its own separate entity for some time. It is supported by people from a range of democratic movements and communities.

What Prompted the Creation of this Programme?

Many people have come together to co-create this programme, and we have done so because we believe that we all deserve to be part of a society that prioritises the needs and well-being of every last one of us. We know that currently in our society there is widespread inequality and that people are being left behind: despite the UK being one of the world's largest economies, over one fifth of the population live in poverty.¹ And this is in the country that has seen the wealth of an increasing number of billionaires go up by 1000% since 1990.² Wealth inequality is not our only problem: the UK is also blighted by systemic racism and discrimination, which gives white people more opportunities and securities than other ethnicities. In all levels of society, the colour of your skin impacts your opportunities, how likely you are to live in crowded housing, have health conditions such as hypertension and diabetes, and how much you are paid.³ Then, in addition to these serious societal problems, there is the terrifying reality that we are facing a climate and ecological emergency. In May 2019, the UK government listened to the science and declared a climate emergency, but in the years since, but not enough has been done to suggest that this existential threat is being taken seriously. This is in spite of the fact that 85% of British adults are worried about climate

¹ [Measuring Poverty 2019](#), Social Metrics Commission, July 2019

² [Billionaire Britain 2022](#), The Equality Trust, December 2022

³ [Disparities in the Risk and Outcomes from Covid-19](#), Public Health England, May 2020

change.⁴ It is unfortunately all too evident that the system we have built in the UK is not fit for purpose.⁵

The Covid-19 crisis only served to stress the problems in our society further. The people who held up our society during this crisis, the key workers – the NHS staff, the delivery workers, the food suppliers, the supermarket shelf stackers, the transport workers, the pharmacists to name a few – are some of the most underpaid people in Britain. They selflessly risked their lives, despite losing colleagues and not having adequate protective clothing, and yet many of them struggle to make ends meet. We cannot ignore the social inequality and exploitation of people and the planet. We must act. As the pandemic showed, we are interconnected, what impacts one of us impacts the rest. We are all responsible for the well-being of others, and the health of our society and the planet.

There is reason to hope: whilst the pandemic was for many a time of crisis and upheaval, not to mention pain and tragedy, it has also been a time of connection and compassion – thousands of Covid Mutual Aid groups were established around the country; hundreds of thousands of people signed up to volunteer their time; millions of pounds were raised in donations for the NHS and other causes. Our response shows us that positive change can happen and that the energy is there. Positive change has continued to happen across our communities. So let's harness that energy to create long lasting change and to shape a society that we are proud of. Let's collectively work together to ensure that each and every person in our society is valued, is treated with the dignity and consideration that they deserve, and is able to thrive, not simply struggle to survive.

If we are to create enduring change that outlasts this crisis and a future in which we can all thrive, regardless of skin colour, then we will need to create a system which is fair, which is inclusive, and which responds to the needs of the people and planet. To do this, we need to reshape our democracy. This is what this programme is about – we believe that supporting community democracy can help change communities, wards, councils, towns, cities, counties, and, ultimately, the country.⁶

How Is this Programme Organised?

The programme is divided into four sections, which we have called modules, and is full of workshops, resources and activities for community building, community democracy and community organising. They are free and are ready to use. Not everything will be useful for everyone: we really encourage people to pick and choose, and use whatever is relevant to them and their context. We also are very keen for people to share their ideas with us – we have spent time constructing these resources, but their content is not comprehensive, so we welcome contributions and co-creation.

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⁴ [85% of British Adults are Worried about Climate Change, Global Citizen](#), August 2019

⁵ Read the [UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Extreme Poverty 2018 Statement](#) on his visit to the UK to learn more about the causes behind the stark social inequality in the UK.

⁶ To learn more about the importance and power of community democracy in the face of the corona crisis, read this overview on [Community Democracy for Corona Mutual Aid](#).

Module One: Personal Processing

Module Two: Engaging Communities

Module Three: Group Support

Module Four: Community Assemblies

Module One: [Personal Processing \(click here to see the resources for this module\)](#)

Personal processing is about taking time to connect with ourselves – to reflect on who we are, how we act, and how we relate to others and the world around us. Using a range of activities, this module seeks to provide opportunities to better understand ourselves by thinking about our identity, our relationship to society, our learnt biases, and our needs. We have placed this module as the first in the series because we think it is really important to start with ourselves as this will help us to better connect with others.

Module Two: [Engaging Communities \(click here to see the resources for this module\)](#)

Engaging communities is about putting energy into understanding who is in your area, what their needs might be, and how you and local networks could support them. It is the act of reaching out to people, be they similar or different, of building connections and of creating trust.

Module Three: [Group Support \(click here to see the resources for this module\)](#)

Group support is focused on enabling people to work with others in a supportive and empathetic way, and on creating group cultures which allow everyone to thrive, provide the emotional support that people need, and give people the skills to deal with conflict constructively.

Module Four: [Community Assemblies \(click here to see the resources for this module\)](#)

Community assemblies are a structured and democratic way for a group of people to share ideas and feelings, discuss problems and generate solutions collectively, with the hope that what is discussed will help people to go on and transform their communities. Assemblies are organised in such a way as to ensure that no one person dominates, and that all voices are heard and valued equally. They promote active listening, inclusivity and trust.

This module, which trains people to organise and facilitate people's assemblies, is central to the Community Transformers programme and the Trust the People project: Community

assemblies offer a means of moving from small community led acts of change to mass collective action and campaigning.

Spread the word. Get involved.