

How could XR respond to the Coronavirus crisis?

*These notes are from a 45-minute facilitated conversation in an online workshop for XR rebels held on March 14 & 15. There is also a [“raw” version of the harvest](#), and more readable [“word collage” format](#). Please note: **no agreement is implied on any items below**; they are simply various perspectives that were present “in the field”. The original conversation took place in a non-linear and creative way; the various items were later sorted into themes.*

A. Given that the government is starting to do a good job in some ways of bringing people together around a common crisis, how do we “seize the moment” and take this opportunity to say “Look! *this* is what XR wants, re climate crisis!”?

Background data

1. The UK gov is showing that we can work together without too much drama in a crisis/emergency i.e. it is not an unreachable goal - it is actually doable to come together around an emergency in manageable ways.
2. It is not a big step to think of transferring this approach across to taking care of climate emergency. It's here now, just like CV.
3. This crisis shows that when leaders accept that there is a crisis, suddenly they are able to find the \$ and the will to deal with it.
4. When leaders are not clear, some people are in panic while others are complacent. This is true both of the virus, and also, about the climate crisis.
5. Government has engaged in leadership by acknowledging that we are in crisis, many families will lose loved ones.
6. Government saying that its response to virus needs to be led by science, standing with science officers on either side, seems to be shifting things.

Solution Ideas

- 1) Let's use government and public response to virus, as example of what we need to do around ECC.
- 2) Point out that Boris is saying “i'm following the science” (repeatedly); then point to the science of IPCC, to show the disconnect.
- 3) Encourage seeing the parallels of science bodies for CV and EEC, importance of recognising rational responses.
- 4) Use this parallel to point to need for government to take the climate science seriously.

- 5) Appreciate that Boris is “following the science” with regard to the virus crisis, and engaging in a rational response. Request that he also “follow the science” with regard to climate crisis.
- 6) Redo the views of Boris talking, intercut with ECC scientists talking without blame or shame.

Concerns about solutions

- 1) Concerns about relying on the government. They have put a lot of people in a lot of danger, by prioritizing the economy ahead of the people.
- 2) If at the end of this, UK government has done a good job and looks credible, they may turn and minimize climate crisis, people may be more likely to believe them.
- 3) Some of us don't see the government response as being science-led.
- 4) While grateful for having science to point to, concern that science and economy are now the only ‘ways of knowing’ that have any credibility.
- 5) Concern that scientific and intellectual thinking is what has gotten us into this, and is not what will get us out of it. (re Vanessa Andreotti)

B. How to approach mirroring/speaking to this opportunity within and without XR?

Background data

1. Public has not had a relatable way to think about what it means, to address a looming social threat by organizing ourselves as though we are “entering a war”. Now we do.
2. People are coming together because they see the virus as a threat.
3. People are demonstrating the characteristics of caring for others, for the future, leaving something for others.
4. Communities are demonstrating that they can change quickly.
5. This threat has brought out all of these things, that are the building blocks of this current opportunity.

Solutions

- 1) Have people who already have a megaphone, i.e. George Monbiot & others, to give public talks and interviews about the connections between addressing virus crisis, and addressing climate crisis.

- 2) Do talks on TV about this.

Concerns

- 1) It can be dangerous if people make too close a comparison between virus crisis and climate crisis.
- 2) Along with the positive climate impacts, the virus has also had difficult economic impacts. We don't want people to associate a negative economic risk with the climate crisis. As in, people thinking that attending to climate issues will damage the economy similarly to virus crisis.

C. How to avoid danger of negative associations between virus crisis & climate crisis?

Solutions

- 1) Tell a positive story about positive responses to virus crisis (like growing food) , associate that with positive possible responses to climate crisis.

D. How is corona virus a learning opportunity for society in relation to Ecological and Climate Crisis?

Data / Context

1. Many of us recognize positive impacts to the environment of the climate crisis.
2. Pollution and carbon emissions are down in China and Italy because of interruption to business as usual.

E. How do we communicate effectively that there *is* a problem (with regard to virus crisis AND climate crisis)?

Data / Context

1. Some people are still minimizing the virus. Some of us know people who are still pushing back, with regard to virus precautions. When this happens, we can sometimes feel like we are the ones who are "crazy" or going too far... similarly with being concerned about climate crisis.

Concerns

1. If we can't find a way to connect with people around the virus crisis, how will we be able to connect with them about the climate crisis?

F. Given that mass mobilisation is being put on hold because of the pandemic, what should we be doing?

Background data

- 1) Some of us are worried about loss of momentum.
- 2) Some of us are concerned that rebels will be caught up in family concerns, drop out of XR.

G. How can we best use Rebel Ringers now?

Background data

1. People who sign up with XR yet are not involved yet, end up being delighted when rebel-ringers call them; they want to talk with us.
2. Now we can't offer them actions; leaves open the question of what to offer them instead...

Solutions

1. Figure out how XR can meet people's needs for connection, contribution, and stimulation, both during the crisis and beyond; we don't live by bread alone.

H. How to address the significant polarity between rebels wanting to do NVDA, and rebels wanting to do community health support work?

Background data

1. Purpose of NVDA was to create a small crisis, to call attention to larger crisis.
2. Now that we have a different larger crisis, *many* people in XR don't want to be creating more crisis (or be perceived as creating more crisis) through NVDA.
3. We don't need to create any more crises to inspire people to deal with larger climate crisis -- we have this one!
4. Climate change is complex, will require more than one set of actions.
5. There is an issue of identity here. We all wear many hats, and one of those is as a member of our communities

Solutions

1. Make use of this current big crisis, as a slingshot to address even bigger crisis regarding climate.
2. Welcome having different XR “strands”, including one doing community support.
3. Do community support, model collaboration and regen side of this work. Use this crisis as opportunity to do PR, have XR seen in good light.
4. Do something in the community, but not necessarily wearing our XR badges.
5. Do something in the community, wearing our XR badges, as a way of creating positive PR for XR.
6. Do something in the community, in partnership with other groups.

Concerns

1. XR should not turn into community health support network, we are about raising alarm on climate crisis, this would change DNA.
2. If we start doing community stuff, may end up with mission creep, trying to fix every problem.

I. What do we do now, with all this time that we have, and an enforced “pause” from doing NVDA-type actions?

Background info

- 1) We had a lot of actions planned, have been very action-oriented in the past. Now many these actions have been cancelled.

Solutions

- 1) Take time to incubate the new and better version of XR.
- 2) Take time in planning and reflecting, this will put us in a good place for when we begin to mobilize again.
- 3) Use the time to reflect & reinvent our strategy, prepare ourselves for how to respond after this is over.
- 4) Shift to a focus on third demand - bringing in new participatory democracy at all levels of culture, including most importantly grass roots.
- 5) Have local groups engaging in their communities, engaging everyone, making community decisions, citizens action networks. A real bottom up new way of being.

- 6) Work on World Assembly idea.

J. How can we in XR take this opportunity to incubate something better?

Background data/perspectives

1. Some of us are welcoming a period of quietness and calmness.
2. Some of us are welcoming the pause, the time to listen and learn.

Solution Ideas

- 1) Use this time to model collaboration and regenerative side of this work.
- 2) Use this time to support one another.
- 3) Take time now to address the backlog of conflict, backlog of relationships that could be better, conversations we have not had time for.
- 4) Take time to practice active listening skills, to learn online.
- 5) Take time to improve systems that need to be more inclusive,
- 6) Take time to link with Global South, with Majority World, to have zoom calls with indigenous leaders in australia, canada.
- 7) Ask people in India and Africa, how they want to be listened to. Model “XR listens”.
- 8) Designate this as “a year to listen.”
- 9) Focus on providing places where each person can be heard, not just where each person can speak.
- 10) Explore what it means, to “be” someone in XR (not just the “doing”)

Coda...

- 1) It feels good to be building something here, with all of these fantastic ideas!