
Methods #4: Engage the community

Here we explore how to tighten the social and communicative ties between members of a potential community.

Inside a community you find many different units, ranging from collectives to single members. All individual units of the community will have their own thoughts and ideas and doubts, a will to be heard, valued and understood as well as the potential to develop together. The needs can be satisfied or oppressed by the common structure, by imposing or stimulating the shared process.



Working towards building a participatory, engaged and active society, we share some of our experiences from building a team, setting up a community space and develop a vision and shared values. You also find examples of self-managed projects which are organized in a horizontal and inclusive way.

Visuals by:
gerbengrotenhuis.com

4.1 Supporting the local community

When setting up a communicative, safe space where a community can grow, it is useful if some members are ready to help facilitate the process. The facilitators often have a good result if they act sensible and empathic and carefully design the interaction space, making sure there are equal conditions and an open and horizontal structure.

Días de fútbol

Group size:

>20

For this project we need some people (they could come from subcultural movements or a collective affected by social exclusion), a sport or any other activity fun enough to link different kind of groups, a space to organize a free activity, a bit of knowledge of legal conditions of the space that we choose and someone with experience in the history of the area that we will try to work in (history of the neighborhood, contact with local people and different spaces in the district).

In our case, these were the conditions: we worked with the people of La Fustería, a squat and self-managed space in Cabanyal, with some people from Humoenlaciudad and one member from Difusor (Barcelona).

We choose Cabanyal because after our experience living there for several months, we would describe it like a complex case of lots of different collectives mixed in a structure of social exclusion.

We've chosen football because it is the most popular sport in Spain and, for sure, in Valencia too. As well, there in Cabanyal exists a hotspot of the conflict known with the name of "los bloques" (engl. *blocks*). It appears to be a modernist building, 90% squated and right now can be considered to be the most important point of a passive resistance against so called "urban development" that the council wants to implement.

There is an abandoned football field in front of the building there. Once it was a

free space where everybody could play football until the council decided to start with the development plan. Then there was a new field (10 meters further) built which now is private.

Dissemination and organization. It is important to contact groups in the area and know the differences between them. In the case of Cabanyal different groups are very territorial and often do not participate together in common activities.

In this case we used printed materials for the neighborhood and the internet to cover the rest of the city.

Site specifics. For the selection of your space it is essential to find accessible open places. Visit the place of organized sports days. Check users of these areas and propose them to participate in planned events showing intention to not invade their everyday space.

Think of access to the space and needed material. Pay attention to the safety of those attending as it is one of the main reasons that police allege to interrupt the event.

Learn how police would react if an intervention happens according to your plan and find responsible for mediating possibly appearing issues.

Making the attendees take part in the activity.

It is important that participants feel they are part of the game.

In the beginning we proposed participants to make their own clothes for playing. We also discussed possible risks with potential players and brainstormed what could be viable to make it real.

We prepared together templates of numbers from 0 to 9 for player's T- shirts. After we used the screen printing technique: even though in simplified way but opens new horizons.

Do not forget to take care of preparing the field! Building gates, cleaning up the field, marking the lines and leaving a sign with announcement of next day's activity should also take place on the initial phase with people you want to engage.

Conflict. In the case of Cabanyal, organizers thought that inviting one of the major character in the entire conflict would be meaningful. Therefore, the Mayor of the town was called and presented to the people before the game.

Transformation. It happened in a symbolic dialogue between power and oppressed. People of the neighborhood came down to greet the mayor and express their requests (we were quite sure that some of them had never seen this person of whom they've heard so often). The game stopped being football and became a matter of no-fun importance. We talked about respect, assigning responsibilities, abuse of power and gender (as it was possible for girls to participate for the first time in such an event).

Review. Take care for a joint viewing of video footages (you might shoot in the process) and collective reflection event. It is essential that people have possibility to speak out, share and be heard. Creating atmosphere where people feel accepted and can socialize is a great help for developing community spirit which is prerequisite for executing coming up ideas and taking care of each other's concerns.

Homeless Veggie Dinner

Target group:

Any

The purpose of this community activity is to develop social ties between community members from different social groups.

The Homeless Veggie Dinner in Berlin is a great example of how to give the homeless and poor people opportunity to actually socialize with people from other social groups. It does a great job in integrating the "traveller", "couchsurfing" and other type of young people from international background in the local society.

Planning the logistics

Venue: find a place that can host a dinner, preferably for a good cause. Make sure to find out, what are the rules of the place (how many people, what's the cooking equipment, is there enough cutlery, are there lavatories, will there be any stuff helping etc). Its good to sign an agreement about cooperation to avoid further misunderstandings.

Food: map the places/cafes/bakeries in the neighborhood that might have leftovers. Establish connection, invite for cooperation.

Developing task list: depending from the scale of the event, its still good to have

an overview about the tasks that need to be done, so, when it comes to the volunteers, they have a concrete idea of what needs to be done.

Gather a crew

This is the step to gather the team of volunteers, that will actually carry out the practical tasks, spreading the information, serving the people, doing the tasks in the kitchen, helping with cleaning.

Put out the call in the channels the people you want to involve (to volunteer), hang out. In case of the Homeless Veggie Dinner, the main channels are mouth-to-mouth (volunteers bring new volunteers), Facebook, Couchsurfing and other on- and off-line communities, where the "international crowd" is used to hang out.

Ask for responses to sign up for concrete tasks, tell exact times, when the people need to be there. Communicate through the channels used, if there are tasks still open or when its all booked.

Promotion

So the purpose of the original event is to connect homeless and poor people with the people from other social groups. That means that 2 completely different channels of information shall be used (for ex, to reach the homeless people, using internet is not necessarily appropriate): put flyers in other soup kitchens in the neighborhood or in the places where the people are hanging out. Actually the personal invitation works the best and a flyer is just a reminder of time&space. Consider the same channels as for searching the volunteers to be used.

Organizing the dinner

Still a deal of logistics needs to be done:

- a plan of where, on what times and how the food will be picked up. Where it will be stored, if needed;
- a plan of cooking - what needs to be chopped when, etc.;
- in the dinner its nice to put out some donation boxes for the food, as well as in the original event there are always "Menu" printed with the choices - all the guests, regardless homeless or not, are served by the volunteers. As well, signs outside to make it easier to find the place. Equip the place with signs of rules if there are any special.

Event

Its all not so difficult, gets better every time but requires some sort of management and facilitation. Its nice to have a person who is in charge of logistics etc, a person, who is coordinating the volunteers and another team member, who has an overview about the actual cooking process.

Make sure, the required anonymity is there - the target group might be sensitive, if there are cameras around or something.

As well, a nice dinner can always be improved by a free shop, free concert by a friend of yours, etc.

Reflection

If possible/necessary, the sharing of experiences between the volunteers after the event definitely contributes to the team dynamics, motivates them to come back as well as ensures improvement of the process.

Places of memory

The streets are "places of memory", spaces between buildings rubbed together where history is accumulated. Formerly the street names reflect the uses of the city. Today street names are selected with the intention of creating universal and unilateral historical memory, generating a homogeneous past in social imaginary. Only certain historical characters and events are commemorated and engraved in collective memory, serving the political interests of a territory and generating a "propaganda" historical memory. The purpose in using names of streets transferred from social use to political manipulation.

The right to live in a city is not only the right to use it. We should live, interpret, and appropriate it. Project seeks recovery of "places of memory" through communication with neighbors. It modifies and renames names of streets of different neighborhoods by its inhabitants and changes are based on previous uses, customs, those who live there and influence their environment. As a result, we return to a neighborhood as a true reflection of experiences and ways of life of its inhabitants.

Strategies

Shaking hands - creating new bonds. Meet new elements, strangers and foreigners in a neighborhood.

Explore it! Ask inhabitants how to get to certain places in the neighborhood, make a study of reference points that you find: how people use their neighborhood and if they mention actual street names.

Spreading signs. Minimize resources and investments in materials.

You can print black and white posters for dissemination with street names residents mentioned as modified ones and call for volunteer's collaboration. Additionally, prepare stickers with images of a plate where inhabitants can write their proposed names.

Word by word, house by house, tea and coffee accompanies the process of oral dissemination.

Collecting results. Collect all proposed street names suggested by neighborhood inhabitants. Take a walk around the neighborhood with a notepad and look for signs that you've put, stickers are there to score proposals.

Voting for popular street names. Organize a "Popular Vote" event and host in a public place (neighborhood street fits perfectly!) where inhabitants could decide on new street names.

Placing new plates. Prepare design of new name plates (for example of an A3 size), think of something simple and easy to read typeface-wise. You can print it in black-&-white or in color. Now everything is ready to update the neighborhood. Take your bike and new posters, go out and paste around!

Tip:

When you organize a voting process on the street, it can be interesting to add a festive touch and atmosphere of fun. Would

be nice to cook meal for everybody or make the event as, for example, a comic puppet theater. Creating a good time for the neighborhood will transform boring political process into enjoyable socialing. Remember that the more you engage local people - the better. For that, you could propose them to contribute with their own ways to the communal events. Kids could be happy to join for setting up new plates with a small people bike crew.

Set up a swap shop

Target group:

Any

Group size:

Any

To be able to get to know the community around you and to interact more in your area or neighbourhood, it can be a good idea to create a meetingpoint. An exchange place for goods or a market has always been a good place for conversation.



Exchanging clothes have proven to work very well as the fast fashion trends produce much more clothes than one could possibly wear.

First, you need to find a location and a timeframe for your swap shop. This can be anything from a day event in a park or on a square, to a regular event in a gallery, project space, or social center. The good thing about making a regular event is that you will gain closer ties with your surrounding community but it needs more organization and a place to store the clothes you will have left over. Once you have your space and time, think of what you will need to present the clothes well, and how many people you will need to be there. It is nice to have the possibility to re-make and repair old or broken clothes at the spot, so do consider organizing sewing machines, scissors and people who are willing to teach others about different techniques. Then promote the event wherever you can. Make sure it is clear how you plan to exchange. You can make 1 to 1 exchange, ask people to bring food if they do not have clothes or make it totally open to bring and take what you want. Plan some time, like an hour, to set up the swap shop with the clothes you have gathered with your team on beforehand. When people come to exchange, ask them kindly to help sort their own clothes onto the hangers or the washing line. Often people come with big bags of clothes. Enjoy and take time to speak to people.



Tip:

To make clothes more easy to find and look more appealing you can try to sort them in different ways, as for example according to color, size, patterns e.t.c. Plan what to do with left over clothes, because they tend to double. If you started with one box of clothes on day one, you will have at least two boxes left in the evening, especially if you can swap freely.

4.2 Teambuilding

Once the group is there, there are plenty of methodological tools which help to make first steps towards forming a group identity, getting to know each other and establishing conditions for trust. Many exercises use a moment of surprise, placing the group members at the border of their comfort zone. These activities are suitable for almost any group and setting.

Cheer up the public transport

Time:

2 hours

Target group:

Any

Group size:

3-10

An easy way to make sure everyone has experienced an action in your group, is to prepare a small, easy one. You can use this as a way of building your team. Many people have never taken part in anything like an action before, so do make sure that everyone feels comfortable.

We choose this action in particular as it is easy to join with different levels of participation, and it is possible to come along without actively doing anything other than just experiencing the atmosphere. The public transport action can be made with many different purposes, such as: a social angle - making travelers speak to each other and improve the social climate; an environmental angle - to promote the public transport instead of using cars (as it is such a nice mean of transportation); an artistic angle - reflecting on our role in everyday life; seeing the action as an installation, or, for example, as a reaction to a recent event, like violence in the public transport.

Go through some different possible angles to what you are doing and let the group decide what they would like to communicate with it. Think about what you will answer when you will be asked by the other passengers. It is good to have a common idea of how you want the action to be received by the audience, but it is not a must.

How to prepare the action

Ask the participants to bring decorative elements with them from home, as for example plants, textile, carpets, small pictures, a washing line e.t.c. Briefly explain that there will be an action taking place, and what it will involve. When the participants arrive, explain what you will do, and that it is possible to be involved in different levels. Make sure everyone knows that they do not have to participate but can if they like.

Tell that different people in the public transport, as well as the authorities, could welcome or disapprove the action and what different scenarios would look like. Make a plan together on how to react to different reactions. Some people can join the action "under cover". People can then participate simply by starting conversations with other passengers or listening to different reactions of the public. You can stimulate different effects by for example setting up all at once when you are inside the public transport, or to set up a little by little, in a slower pace. The second option is often seen less intrusive from other passengers and sometimes people will spontaneously join the action by, for instance, spreading out their scarf over the seat, to make the seats more colorful. Before leaving to set up the action, make sure someone is responsible to document the action (if that is wished).

After setting up, enjoy the ride, speak with the other passengers and ride for as long as you decided in advance. Then carefully take down the installation, get to your meeting point and share your experiences.

Musical chairs with questions

Time:

>30 min

Target group:

Any

Group size:

3-10

This is a team building activity where at the same time people get to know each other.

Make a circle in the room with chairs. Prepare the session by sticking some questions behind the chairs (one question for each chair). The questions will be

about creative activism, about expectations, personal information, weird questions, etc...

When the music starts, participants dance while moving around the circle of chairs. When the music stops participants should sit in the chair closest to them. The facilitator then point out some people and they have to answer the questions they have in their chair. After 3 or 4 people answered, the music starts again and participants start dancing again until the next time the music stops. Repeat this as many times as you think is necessary.

Some suggestions for questions are:

What does creative activism means? One word that defines you? When you think about creative activism what do you think of? Something you would change in your country? Something you would ask for to politicians in your country? Make the noise of your favorite animal! What was the last artistic thing you have seen? Which famous character were you in love with when you were a teenager? Show us one your hit dance steps! Tell us something you have always wanted to do in the street and why!

Tip:

Using variety of music styles and even cheesy music helps to set a relaxing and funny atmosphere. Take in account the type of group you have when you decide the type of questions you will stick in the chairs.

Possible mission

Time:

>30 min

Target group:

Any

Group size:

3-10

This exercise will allow you to generate a good ambience, to build a team and to see your participants in "action" in a fun way.

Give the group a paper with a list of tasks related with the topic of your workshop or to build a team, ask them to complete the tasks in 30 minutes (if you have a big group you can give them 2 papers). In this case the tasks were:

1. Names: create a game to learn the names of each other.
2. Choose a Banksy graffiti and represent it in a freeze frame.
3. Write and sing a song dedicated to the University containing this words: tra-la-la; Irn Bru, bon bon, free hugs, Glasgow City Council, BBC.
4. Make a list of "Do not signs"(ex. Don't enter, don't smoke) you found in the university.
5. Make a group photo (including the deliverer).
6. They're some quotes related with creative activism hidden in the room. You must to find 3, but take care because they are other quotes non related.
7. Make a definition (like you can find in the Oxford English Dictionary): what is creative activism?

Silent ice breaker - routes of creative activism

Time:

30 mins

Target group:

Any

Group size:

3-10

There is a set of cards with tasks (actions), each of which are somewhat related to a moment in history. The tasks are ordered in a sequence so that on each paper there are hints to when the task shall be done.

Example: 1. "You are the first one - take a chair in the middle of the room and sit down" (Reference to Rosa Parks action)

2. "When You see someone sitting on a chair in the middle of the room, join

them." (this assignment is the same for two people, still the same reference)

3. "When three people are sitting on chairs, take two sticks that you can find in the room and start to drum on a chair." (Rhythms of resistance)

4. "When someone starts to drum on a chair, play a clown and caricature a random person in the group". (Clown army)

(and so on)

In the case of success the group shall go through the sequence of tasks fluently.

1. Explain the rules of the game: through a lottery each of the participants get a paper with a task. In that moment the rule of silence starts - participants are not allowed to discuss the papers, show them to others and are allowed to speak or make noises only if its the assignment.

2. Give the signal to start the game - the participants shall just look around, what's happening and react, when its their turn.

3. Reflection round: let participants freely reflect on the activity, asking about their associations on which creative activism act was referred to each task. If deeper explanation necessary, ask the participants to complement each other.

Tip:

If there are not enough people and each of us have to take 2 or more tasks, people might get lost in reading the papers and not enjoying the game. The best is if the facilitator can just take out the tasks that are over.

Speed dating

Time:

30 mins

Target group:

Any

Group size:

3-10

This method suits as intro activity to break the ice of the group and the

participants starts to get to know each other a bit better.

Tell participants that they will be involved in a special type of speed dating. Original speed dating is an organized method of meeting potential romantic partners in which participants evaluate each other over the course of a single event through a series of brief one-on-one meetings. For this special type of speed dating participants will make couples and talk for around 5 min about a topic or question that facilitator will give to them. After first 5 minutes participants have to find a new couple and a different topic will be given to them. Participants keep changing couples and sharing about different topics as times as the facilitator decided.

Some suggestions for questions could be:

Tell about the last action you have been involved? Why you decide to came to this workshop? Your favorite ice-cream flavor? Somebody that inspire you? Where do you live? Tell about the organization are you coming from. Share a topic you are engaged with...

Tip:

You can make this activity with people sitting around, standing up mixed or even standing in two circles, one inner and one outer, choose the setting you feel more comfortable with or even create your own! To create a balance between interesting conversations an a relaxing atmosphere we recommend to you o mix different type of questions: some deep, some funny, some personal, some non-personal, some random, etc... When the place gets silent is a good signal to change couples and give a new question!

Talk to me about...

Time:

>30 min

Target group:

Any

Group size:

Pair

This method is taking a shortcut to interesting conversations.

This method is good to quickly get beyond the standard questions when people meet each other for the first time. Its especially good in a semi-informal setting such as dinners or a networking event.

The participating people write down what they feel like talking about the very moment. Make sure people feel comfortable to write really ANYTHING on their note, not just what they think is appropriate for the event. This way you can make sure the conversations become truly interesting. The paper with the hints, often shaped as a speech bubble, is stuck with security pins to their backs. The topics of the main interest so become visible, and when choosing whom to speak to, you always have an entry point to interesting conversation.

Tip:

Play with the design of the messages to fit your event. You can wear the message above your head, carry it on a stick, shape it to different items. e.t.c.

The super power

Time:

>30 min

Target group:

Any

Group size:

3-10

This is an introduction exercise to break the ice between participants and getting to know each other.

Participants sit in a circle. Ask participants to answer this question: if you would have a super power, which one would it be and why? Give them some minutes to think about the answer. Participants share their answers.

Tip:

Depending on the group you can also ask them to imagine and perform their super-posture.

4.3 Reflecting

As we rush through life, events and processes the moments of reflection, especially in a group environment, tend to be quite rare. To once in a while ignore that blinking red priority on the to-do-list, stop, take time and evaluate the shared experiences is important to be able to meet challenges and build accomplishments in the future. Methods which contributes to the learning process, group dynamics and tightening the relationships between group members can come to have a big impact on the energy levels and the motivation.

Reflection on community work

Time:

1 hour

Target group:

Curious

The aim of the exercise is to evaluate the community work in the larger context as well as to look at a sustainability aspect of it. It can be used after already performed project or action, as well as analysing an example of a given project.

The facilitator introduces the group with the aim of the activity - to see how the community-aimed projects actually work with the community. In case if there is not a common activity the group has been implementing, there is presentation of an example to be provided.

The group sits around a table and is provided with pens. There are papers on the table, each of them with following question written at the bottom of the page. Each question repeats at least twice, the amount of questions corresponds to the number of participants:

- The success of the project for the organization
- The success of the project for the community
- The success of the project for each participant of the activity
- The success of the project for the group as whole

The facilitator should have prepared questions that can be applied to each of the categories above. Examples of questions are:

- Were the expectations fulfilled?
- What could have improved the experience?
- What needs of the (see the object on the paper - organization, community, participants or the group) were not fulfilled?
- What could be done better in the future?
- How to improve the community involvement in the future?

Each of the participants takes one paper. The facilitator first pose one of the questions above and participants write an answer - a sentence about the topic they see below, related to the action. Participants fold the part of the paper with the sentence, so that next person can not see it and passes it clockwise.

After the papers has passed around the circle, each participant finds another one who had the same category on their paper. Both of them unfold the papers, read them and compare. They also share between them, which points they agree with and which not.

Depending on how much time is left, the couples can share some, two or three, of the most interesting common points with the whole group or the results can be displayed at a wall for everyone.

4.4 Developing selfmanaged projects

Collaborative creation, copy-paste and open source culture can as well apply to events like actions, workshops and festivals. Once there is a group of ignitors, the necessity and time, a community building process can start. Some events that are inspired, developed and implemented by the community itself and with a little bit of imagination can be copied and pasted wherever else in the world.

Festival de Andar por Casa

Target group:

Any

“Home-made” Festival in Asturias.



The “Home- made” festival started in Asturias in 2010 as a one night festival. The festival is a participatory, self-managed artistic and cultural event where some inhabitants of the the city open their houses/flats to the public and for one night transform them into alternative cultural spaces with a diverse range of activities: performances, workshops, concerts, theatre, etc...

Through their activities the festival want to connect the local community, to create new alternative cultural channels in the city and to bring art and creativity to public spaces and to other type of public.

Participants of the festival will wear an apron as a identification object.

To facilitate the participation and to prevent overfilled activities, the program is divided in 2 or 3 routes. Each route is composed of 3 or 4 locations with 1 hour time slots. At the end all routes meet together in one square of the city where a final party with concerts is held.

Each route has as well their own name and their own animator who is in charge to lead and motivate the group and be the timekeeper so people don´t get lost for hours in one place and never appear in the next one!

This festival won´t be possible without the active participation of people from the local community who propose activities, build the festival setting and promote it.

This festival is free, open and 100% replicable! Feel free to do so and to add whatever you feel could suit your local community.

A video from last edition can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/102205752>

Kick- off meeting

Pass on information through all the channels and host a kick off meeting with the people that are motivated to be involved. Spread the call for the meeting as far as possible - unexpected participants can contribute even more. We recommend to organize the meeting in a cozy place to create a nice atmosphere to present and discuss about the activities.

During the meeting make a comprehensive intro to the festival for participants to get an idea what is it all about. You can use photos or videos from past editions. Take time for presentations - making new people feel comfortable with

the group is highly important. Collect the interests of the people: will people be interested in opening their houses, interested to realize activities or willing to help in the overall organization, which concerns they have. After make a first time plan and divide tasks in the group.

At the end of this meeting it is important to have an overview of places and activities. It normally happens that you have more places than activities or the opposite so it's great to have an overview to know what you should look for.

Preparing the routes

This involves deciding where to host each activity, taking in account the type of activity and the size of the place and connecting the host with the workshop giver.

Decide when each activity will take place depending on the host needs or where the place is situated in the city. Tip: we usually choose the most far-away spaces at the beginning when people are fresh and happy to walk. An animator of the route is a great help! Usually choose the name for the animator which is related with a homely object that we can use during the festival to get the group together.

Design maps with the routes and place, take care people can find it.

The festival

2 hours before the festival starts: last check of needs with the hosts and the workshop givers, building the meeting point using the homely decorations, getting yourself ready and cozy with your favorite pajamas and hair-curlers, finishing the aprons for the participants and bring the route maps to the meeting point.

In the beginning of the festival, make it clear to the participants which routes there are and who the animators of each route are. Divide people in routes checking that the sizes of the groups are more or less equal and enjoy the activities!

Visuals by:

Ye too ponese

Tip:

Less is more. For the first time you organize the festival you can decide to have only one route with 4 places and activities, so you can check easily how things go and how many people come. In the beginning check that groups formed are more or less similar, having in mind that people are going to be in a house with a limited space. The animator is an important role during the festival: she helps the group a lot to gather together and be motivated, she is the time keeper and prevent people from getting lost in between places. We wouldn't recommend to have routes longer than 4 places. In our experience after the fourth house people lose motivation to continue. For inspiration you can check here: <http://festivaldeandarporcasa.blogspot.com.es/> or in the facebook of the festival, looking for festival de andar por casa group or following this link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/224276880921715/?fref=ts>

Re:activium Silvestre

Laboratory

Target group:

Curious

Group size:

10-20

The project provides a weekend of coexistence in a rural area. The project offers a collective point of meeting in a wild environment to think, raise or create everyday tools of resistance "Micro-Activisms".

The format of the meeting is generally based on collaborative processes, organic, flexible and open organization. Therefore it works as support for hosting proposals. It is a space for sharing experiences and strategies to live differently. Life experiences that evolve around the same axis: they are to be shared as an alternative ways of inhabiting the world.

It is not just a meeting, it's daily life. An experience of living which seeks to generate connections, ties, spaces of trust and active listening. An environment designed to facilitate self-expression and communication. Together we generate our findings, we discovered the micro activism and activate our daily subversion.

The format of the meeting is organic and mutable. The result is unpredictable, and that's interesting! Because it depends on the people involved, their profiles and experiences, they will be who build the contents of the meeting.

Why?

It is to share and propose new ways to position ourselves in the world with a critical and creative consciousness. It is to discover and analyze micro activism. It is to share the collective intelligence and activate our subversive daily life. It is to experiment and explore from the plural, sharing a group living and generating ties of affinity. It is also to creating spaces of trust and active listening.

Participants

Limit of places. This is required to manage space, welcoming the participants and take good care of the group. We advise not to take a larger group than 20 people but this also depends on the capacity of the organization.

Open Call

In the open call people were encouraged to send massive proposals, spontaneous and creative, to participate in the Meeting.

Registration Form was the key tool in the process. Think what form will help you find the target group of participants, activists experts, creative experimenters, rebel explorers and other. Keep in mind that the content will depend on the target group.

You can make a form with questions to guide those interested in participating, to collect personal information and contact needs of each participant to prepare the space and to facilitate later the selection process.

Our idea was to unite and bind the different "species" of our areas: Activism and Social Movements + Arts + Culture.

Economy

The festival is free, participants do not need to pay for participating or a place to sleep. In exchange, a participant bring a process and contribution to the content of the festival with his proposal.

However, we recommend preparing a budget. Think of different methods of self-subsidizing to cover necessary expenses. Think of ideas, there are many ways such as: festivals, dining, selling T-shirts, badges, crowdfunding.

Neighbors

The essence of the event was to be developed in the rural environment. It is therefore important that you prepare the environment for the things which will come. Make a presentation open to the neighbors about the project that will develop, invite them for a cup of tea, make a stop at the local bar and tell them everything. The support of neighbors is basic, make the event into something that is integrated into the everyday life so that the project is accepted and does not become a parasite for people.

Invitations

Another tip is to invite people, groups, projects that are active in the local environment where the event will take place. You can prepare a panel discussion around a topic, presentations or simply prepare a casual moment, like a coffee time to share and talk. In this way participants can generate a local and realistic view of the situation, new possibilities, open collaborations and a swap space. And most importantly - the event is in a direct contact with its context.

Open activity

You can propose to the participants to think about the possibility of preparing an activity/ event open to the public so that others interested in the event come and contribute. It is always rewarding to share and welcome new people to enrich the process. This helps the design process so that it doesn't become closed and to share the project outcomes.

People's kitchen

We propose to close the event with a meal for everyone which also invites people from the public, so that we get to know each other in a relaxed and festive atmosphere. It is a perfect place for participants to have contact with the life around and people of the village. It is also a chance to thank them for their time of collaboration.

Feedback

After finishing the event, when participants have returned to their homes and have had time to digest the experience, propose an evaluation where they share their personal impressions. In this way you come to resume contact (so we do not all suddenly disappear) and you can have a more external view of how the event was.

Link for more information - www.recolectivo.net/re-activium-silvestre/

Recycled creativity festival

Target group:

Curious

The Recycled Creativity Festival started at 2009 in Berlin as a 1 day festival to celebrate the sustainable practices together with the initiatives that are working with reposing waste materials (repairing, reusing and recycling) and their communities.

There can be a lot of additional activities but the central event is The Great Recycling Day that has peoples kitchen, Cakes For Solidarity action, various workshops and stage program.

Basically the festival can be replicated in various environments but there are a couple of main concerns..

The attendance and participation is free

It doesn't cost money (voluntary donations can be collected though). But any kind of input - materials, skills, time - is welcome. Any visitor can accidentally turn into workshop giver and a workshop facilitator can learn from their participants.

Only reuse, recycle and repair

..unless it is unavoidable. As well as use of sustainable energy sources belongs to this festival - also no disposable plastic cutlery, no to large energy consuming devices or buying materials for workshops (tools are allowed though :)

It is what You make out of it

Anyone is free to spot necessity for some DIY action, gather materials and start a workshop (for example, you see that there are not enough ashtrays - find material that can be used for that, gather people using the mediums of the festival site map and the stage and start!)

The festival can be a complicated process if well-thought. To make it run easier, we propose some things to keep in memory.

Kick-off meeting

Pass on information through all the channels and host a kick-off meeting or the people that are motivated to be involved. Spread the call for the meeting as far as possible - unexpected participants can contribute even more.

In the kick-off meeting

Collect the contacts of the people; make the list of resources that can be offered to the festival - skills, time, material, other contacts; ask for peoples wish ilst - what would they get from festival; make a time plan; divide tasks.

Its good to also rely on external resources or look for more people, but be realistic - its also not a tragedy if some parts of the plan drop off :)

The festival

There are such potential areas of busyness, hat require at least one person who feels the initiative and ownership and strength to facilitate it in the way that every participant and contributor feels happy :)

The stage

invite independent artists to perform, especially if they are somehow connected with the topic of the festival - like, playing on the recycled instruments, or making a stand-up-comedy act about it. We also paid attention on the interaction with the public. Artists shall be comfortable with performing in a free event and also their wishes matter (maybe thy want participate in the workshops, get warm dinner, need a car ride, want workshop to make a costume for them, or distribute their CDs).

PR

Involves collecting, rewriting, translating and spreading info in the relevant

channels. As the event is free, its nice to credit and promote every artist, workshop facilitator and contributor.

Volunteers

Significant part of the festival are volunteers - people who help to prepare the festival site, take shifts in DIY shop, bar or help with cooking. The call for volunteers is spread through the personal channels of the festival crew as well as mailing lists, newsletters and such sites as Couchsurfing and more alternative-friendly ones.

Cakes for solidarity

As the festival is organized without finances but with some expenses (like fuel or some stage equipment) there is need for some money. Nice way of getting it is asking people to bring cakes or make a cake baking evening the day before (everybody brings ingredients) and then give them away for donation in the festival.

Peoples kitchen

As the festival takes the whole day, its an idea to make a co-cooking action. We usually use dumpstered ingredients or sourced from initiatives that give away food that otherwise would go to waste. Even though a chief-cook needed, its a collaborative process. The preparations (cleaning and cutting the vegetables) can be done in the evening before.

Workshops

Contact all the initiatives in the neighborhood/ your social circle that have something to do with the topic. There is always space for spontaneous interventions.

General coordination

A person or a group of people that keep their hand on the pulse of the event, that can be contacted if there are urgent issues and who are willing to take responsibility.

The Thank-You dinner

To bring all the initiatives, artists, volunteers and coordinators together, cook a dinner collectively and look back at the festival. It is also good for making future

plans.

Link for more information - www.recycledcreativity.info

Tip:

When asking for contributions, ask people to be realistic with their commitments - one small but well performed task is better than large unfinished ones. Less is more - maybe first year there are no cakes or no stage but every person is involved and happy and feels like part of a family - and that's what matters.

Rhythms of Resistance

Target group:

Any

Group size:

10-20

Material:

percussion drums of different kind. The minimal set consists of single (not connected to each other) drums: low surdo (lowest bass sound) plus soft-beater sticks, mid surdo (higher bass sound) plus soft-beater sticks, high surdo (highest bass sound) plus soft-beater sticks, repenique (high tune-producing sound) plus sticks, snare\caixa (loudest metal-string sound) plus sticks, tamborim (multiple flexible rods for a loud and sharp high „crack“) plus a tamborim stick, agogo (two bells).



Existent groups of Rhythms of Resistance (RoR) are the network of action samba bands, playing for all kinds of socio-political and ecological causes. It exists to actively criticize and confront any form of domination, exploitation, discrimination or oppression and choose tactical frivolity and/or other forms of creative protest as a way to express rage and indignation of drumming participants.

Replication of these ideas would be a requirement if you want to be a part of the network. Agree with them? In this case - creation of your band is possible under next principles:

- *anti-hierarchical and egalitarian*: striving to avoid all possible hierarchies (i.e., class, experiential, informational..) in our bands to develop sustainable structure where everyone feels equal and comfortable to express;

- *anti-capitalist*: striving not to replicate capitalist reproduction system within our bands due to critical view towards consumption, competition, unavoidable exploitation and other. Instead we try to create structures most acceptable for everyone which means we do not have any participation fee, all the band resources are communal, we try to develop solidarity support and egalitarian

methods of compensation if needed. That is also the reason why, for example, we try to create d.i.y. instruments or reuse old ones;

- *anti-sexist and anti-racist*: striving for maximum accessibility for all genders and races (also ages and classes) in bands where different people feel comfortable and equally valued. This principle implies reflections about dynamics in the group and creation of safe space for everyone to be able to speak out their issues related as well as learning more on issues of structural domination by your own or collectively;

- *fighting for social and ecological justice*: striving to support fights against social oppressions or ecological destruction or initiating them. This is the external goal of samba activists using samba as a form of political action.

- *tactical frivolity*: using methods inspired by carnival to confront and criticize any system of domination. That means we engage humor and dressing up as a technic to distract. At the same time we reject any false opposition between militancy and creative forms of resistance.

- *open*: striving to spread information about network existing and being open for joining to any people who share our principle.

Interested to join? Research on local bands in your town and try it out!

If there are no such present yet, check out what can help you to start your group:

Preparing a Kick-off meeting

Gather information you consider important for people to know about RoR. Compress essential part in one input and create means which can help you in spreading the info: flyers, posters, stickers, posts in social networks and so on. Do not forget to mention time and spot for meeting and how long discussion could last! Be aware of spreading info in different places attended by different kinds of people if you intend to attract diverse crew.

Before the meeting actually starts, it is important to think about agenda, prepare exercises to introduce people to each other, prepare a space and about other facilitation (moderation) issues.

The kick-off meeting

Make sure theoretical information is clear, discuss important issues: how you

would like to make decisions, do you all understand and agree with principles, what can be your meeting place and time, which instruments you want to use, how do you think you can learn tunes. Collect contacts of the people and agree on communication means.

This meeting can last for hours due to amount of important issues to discuss. It is good also to postpone parts of important discussion for further on and give other people chance to facilitate it.

Keeping the Flow

It is something ideally everyone in the band is responsible for. If you decide that the Principles are actual for you, it is not enough to only state it. Due to imperfections of our world and deep influence of the society, it is in most cases not so easy to be anti-sexist, -racist, -classist egalitarian person, even if we want so. Therefore constant reflections are needed and enough care to keep safe space for people to be able to speak up.

Visuals by:

Rhythms of Resistance Network

Tip:

It is not necessary to have proper instruments to play RoR. Most of bands in networks start with d.i.y. temporal decisions which allow starting rehearsals immediately. All the instruments can be substituted by something like a bucket, a can, a lid of the pen keeper, some fabric and tape! If you are curious about how instruments look and sound, find out more here:

<https://www.rhythms-of-resistance.org/spip.php?rubrique55&lang=en>
