
Methods

This chapter is a collection of our experiences, introducing creative activism to groups and facilitating a common process. Here you find exercises which can be useful to turn your ideas into actions. The methods are marked according to the level of experience, time and size of the group.

METHODS



Visuals by:
Anna-Lena Schroers

Methods #1: Introduction

There are a thousands of ways to explain and transmit how creative activism operates, lives and breathes. It border the domains of art and activism, is highly contextual and have innovative and sharable properties. Here you find some examples of how you can introduce and explain the concept for different audiences.



1. Introducing creative activism

Depending on the target group and setting of the workshop, we experimented with different ways to introduce people to creative activism: for a group of curious people we used a basic communication model and invited speakers which are active in the field, for people who were already familiar with the concept, we provided best practice examples of creative activism and information about creative methods used in the history of activism. The choice of approach depends on the knowledge base of the group, and the time and resources available.

From our experience, the most important when introducing the concept, was to find common ground. To share the properties of creative activism and its impact in society within the group or audience. To make this happen, we used collaborative and participative processes, some examples you find in the methods listed in this section.

Visuals by:

gerbengrotenhuis.com

Collective definition of creative activism

Time:

30 mins

Target group:

Any

Group size:

Any

Material:

Paper, large papers and color pens

This method gives space for sharing individual preconceptions about the concept of creative activism and create a shared framework.

Divide the people in two groups. If you have many participants, it is good to make 4 or 6 groups, with maximum 5 people per group. One group will find keywords around Creativity, defining the term. The other group will find keywords which for them define Activism. After 15 min the groups merge and present to each other briefly their definition. Using big paper and color pens, link both concepts together, discuss if the keywords from the separate concepts still works together or new keywords appears.

Tip:

If you use this activity as a starter in a session, you can hang the resulting poster in the working space and come back to it just before the end of the session. Give the opportunity to the participants to redefine their definition and add, change or delete keywords or links if appropriate.

Explaining creative activism using communication theory

Time:

>30 min

Target group:

Any

Group size:

Any

Material:

A board or a large paper and markers.

This method provides a framework of factors involved in the process of implementing creative actions.

Shannon-Weavers basic model of human communication identifies different factors involved in a communication process. These factors are a *sender* who wants to send a message to a *receiver* or *receptor*. The message is transmitted using a specific *code* and through a concrete *channel*.

If we are looking at our actions as a communication process, we can use some of these concepts to present creative activism and reflect on the process behind creating an action.

As an individual or a group we want to send a message to a *receptor*. The receptor will be our target group (women, old people, young people, unemployed, pedestrians, etc...). The message will be transmitted using a *code*, in our case the code will be the technique used (urban intervention, guerrilla, craftivism, culture jamming) and through a concrete *channel*, in our case this will be the location where we will place the action (the supermarket, school, forest, inside a train, mailboxes, etc...).

After presenting this basic model it is possible to analyze each factor in detail, if it is needed. It is also interesting to analyze the relations between the different factors involved and how they influence each other.

An example: *If we want to spread the message "less consumption" it will have different effect if we spread this message in a shopping mall or in a small shop*

in a rural village. The message about consumption will be different if we want to target children, elderly people or activists. The technique used to get this message across will influence the location of the action and to who will be the receiver etc...

Tip:

Really experienced participants may find this exercise a bit basic. This model can be used as scheme to help participants in the process of creating a concrete action. It can also be used when a group have experienced a concrete action, to analyze the different factors involved and to evaluate results and future improvements.

Hidden quotes of creative activism

Time:

30 mins

Target group:

Beginner

Group size:

Any

Material:

Papers with quotes, tape.

This method aims to reflect about creative activism in the society, and break the prejudices and presumptions about the concept using quotes. In the description you find some examples of quotes you can use, but the best is, if you can adapt the quotes to your group and their context.

Before the group arrives, hide the quotes in different places of the room. When they come are in the room ask them to look for the quotes. Ask them to keep in mind, that some of the quotes are related with creative activism and some of them are not. Tell them that there is only three quotes related with creative activism, and ask them to select which ones. Give the group some time and space to discuss if the quotes they find are related or not, and when they agree that they have three notes, ask them to share which quotes they selected.

Analyze the three quotes with the group and create a common definition of creative activism. For example, *if you have "Be the change you wish to see in the world" by Gandhi ask "What does it means to BE the change?" "How can you be the change and encourage others to be this change?" "What kind of changes do we need in ourselves and in the society?"*

Some quotes will more likely be in the selection than others, not only because of their content, but also because of their author. Probably the group will agree that there are more than three quotes related to creative activism, but some are more related than others, and some have not relation at all.

For example, they might agree that "You teach a child to read, and he or she will

be able to pass a literacy test" by George W. Bush is not related at all, and that who wrote it has a big impact on this decision. In this moment you can facilitate the discussion, explaining that the quote, which all of them agree as non related, actually could be related. In the example, Bush, is speaking about critical thinking and the educational system. This could be an example to explain, how we need to teach children not only to read, but also to understand what they are reading. If this way of interpreting the quote would be correct, the quite will be related. Discussing how you could relate everything with creative activism will break the thinking patterns around the topic.

From this point you can explore the ideas they had before about creative activism with questions like: *"Did your understanding about creative activism change? How?"* *"Which one of the quotes reflects creative activism best?"*

Quotes

"Be the change you wish to see in the world" - Mahatma Gandhi

"If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude" - Maya Angelou

"Creativity takes courage" - Henri Matisse

"You can never solve a problem on the level on which it was created." - Albert Einstein

"There is no time for cut-and-dried monotony. There is time for work. And time for love. That leaves no other time." - Coco Chanel

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." - Anne Frank

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead

"If everyone demanded peace instead of another television set, then there'd be peace." - John Lennon

"You teach a child to read, and he or her will be able to pass a literacy

test." - George W. Bush

Tip:

Hide the quotes well but not "too" well to avoid losing too much time.

Is this creative activism?

Time:

30 mins

Target group:

Beginner

Group size:

Any

Material:

Several photos of different actions, symbols, people e.t.c.

This is a method to create discussion about the concept of creative activism and to share ideas and opinions between participants about the topic. It is a good starter before creating a collective definition.

Prepare a lot of photos from different actions, symbols, people, etc. Before the session starts, make a two spaces on the floor or the wall, saying "This is creative activism" and "This is not creative activism". Spread all the photos around a part of the room.

Ask the participants to together decide where to place the photos and to share why they would place it there. The group will discuss about the reasons for doing so After the photos are placed in the categories, the group together think about what keywords came out of the images they choose and decide if this keywords could be used as a starting point to create a definition of creative activism.

Picturing creative activism

Time:

30 mins

Target group:

Beginner

Group size:

Any

Material:

Several photos of different actions, symbols, people, etc.

How does creative activism looks like?



Before the session, prepare at least three pictures that can be labeled as "Creative activism" "Vandalism/Indifference" and "Traditional activism/Campaigning", all reflecting the same topic. In this example we use the topic of the supermarkets expansion. You can print the pictures or project them.

Show the pictures to the participants and ask them to choose which one they would identify as "creative activism" and why. Ask them, how they will classify the other pictures and try to initiate a deeper discussion by asking questions like "How does one choose what type of action they make?" "Which one do you think is more effective?" "In which picture are you most likely to be involved?" "Have you been involved in any of this situations?" It is really interesting to provide some time for the participants to share their experiences and discuss how they felt and why they decided to take action or be passive, and how.





Tip:

Try to connect the exercise to an issue that is relevant to your participants. It could be local, but if for instance your group has been campaigning on a certain topic, listening to their experiences will make the whole exercise much more interesting.

Presenting creative activism

Time:

1 hour

Target group:

Beginner

Group size:

Any

Material:

Tape, pen, paper, actions printed on papers, a place to stick papers or present a presentation with a beamer.



Before you make a presentation, think about your audience. What do you think they know already? Estimating the knowledge of your group, can be very difficult, especially if you work with mixed groups or in an open setting like for example a festival. If you notice the group seem to need more basic knowledge, or more high level content while you present, it can be good to have thought

about how you can tweak your presentation so that it becomes more understandable, or include more of the experiences of the group.

One way to make your presentation more interesting and participatory, is to ask the people who will attend to bring an example of creative activism they found inspiring, and then integrate the input in your presentation.

You can structure best practice examples and presentation either around properties such as "suprise effect" and "humor" or according to techniques such as "invisible theathre", "flash mobs", "interventions in public space", "media tweaks", "adbusting" and "hardware hacks". If your audience has brought examples, you can sort them in this structure on a wall, or ask them to what kind of catagory their example would belong. Be prepared to add new catagories.

Tip:

While presenting, make sure it is in a tempo which everyone can follow. If you don't have much time to spend, it is always better to choose to show less examples than to run through a presentation quickly. Make sure there is space for discussing and the group feel comfortable to ask questions during the presentation or at the end.

Sharing showcases

Time:

2 hours

Target group:

Any

Group size:

Any

Material:

Photos and videos, of different types of actions, from different collectives. A wall to use for projecting, and a beamer.

An introduction activity to get an overview of different types of existing tactics. This is useful to bring inspiration before starting to plan concrete actions.

Prepare the session by creating a personal playlist with videos you find interesting. The type of actions and videos you choose will depend on the type of group you are working with. Show the group different videos and during the process ask them questions. You can use each video to present a type of creative actions or to show a concrete collective that works in your local area. Some examples of questions could be: What type of creative action is it? Did you know about this collective? What would you think about this action if you would have seen it in real life? Do you think this type of action is suitable for your local area? What is the topic behind this action? and so on.

Tip:

If you are working with an experienced group, you can ask them to bring their own videos and photos from favorite actions, actions they might have been involved in or actions happening in their community. This will make the session more personal and will encourage people to share their experiences within the group.

Using a statement to introduce creative activism

Time:

30 mins

Target group:

Beginner

Group size:

10-20

Material:

Handouts with the statement you will use. A large paper with the statement and pens.

This method aims to reflect about creative activism using a statement as a starting point for further discussion.

Depending on the size of the group, give a copy of the statement to each participant or small group. Give them some minutes to read it. Ask the people to decide if this statement fits with their idea of creative activism. Analyze the different parts of the statement together, asking participants to express their opinion about it. For example: The first affirmation in this statement is, *"If we want to change the society we need to unleash our imaginations."* Some examples of questions you can ask to intimate reflection could be: *What do you mean with unleash our imaginations? Do you think this is necessary to create social change? Why? Does someone want to share an example of an action that unleashed their imagination? etc...*

"If we want to change the society we need to unleash our imaginations, take creative risks, and explore new forms of communicating besides the lecture and the press release. Our events or actions should feed the soul as well as the brain, and we should laugh and celebrate even as we speak the truth.

After the discussion, put the poster with the statement in a visible place in the room. Ask participants to think of the statement, using it to define creative activism. Add or delete aspects they think are missing or which are not needed in this definition. Discuss in the full group each proposal before adding it to the poster. Make sure the changes to the statement are easy to read.

Jim Hightower"

The activity finishes when the group does not want to add or change anything.

Tip:

For groups bigger than ten people we recommend to divide them in small groups and give each group one copy of the statement. In this case the first part of analysis will be done in small groups, leaving the reconstruction of the initial definition for the big group. It is also possible to use multiple statements.

Methods #2: Processing reality

In our daily life we are influenced by the information we receive from our immediate surroundings. Our interaction with society and our way of thinking is impacted by our previous experiences and knowledge, our cultural context, behavioral patterns, social norms, advertisement and many other factors. We sort the incoming information and identify with some topics and ignore the rest. Together this information shapes the fabric we describe as our reality. Due to the contextual characteristics of creative activism, we find it important to connect the issues present in the reality of the actors with the issues present in the community in which they live. We focus on the political and social context and the communication channels in our surroundings.



Visuals by:
gerbengrotenhuis.com

2.1 Contextualizing creative activism

Creative activism as such need a social context to make sense, without connections with the society it will appear empty. An action taken out of its context, placed in a different society, will not necessarily have the same effect or even serve a similar purpose as the original. Though there are shareable tactics and tools which are vividly used and applied in many communities around the globe, it is a consideration to develop an understanding of the context in which you operate. By reflecting over the context and plan actions using an bottom-up process, you can avoid making actions that seem out of place, become misunderstood, or considered to be pointless.

Understanding the contextual nature of creative activism

Time:

1 hour

Target group:

Experienced

Group size:

10-20

Material:

Beamer, computer, internet. Optional: paper and marker for taking notes.

Make sure you and the participant arrange the room in a non-formal setting, maybe they prefer to sit on pillows on the floor instead of chairs, in a circle e.t.c. Explain the sequence of activities this exercise will include.

Visioning

"When was the first moment you remember yourself getting political?" Let the people close their eyes and ask them to remember, their first memory of when they acted with a political behavior. Take time for the people to go through their memories. If it feels appropriate, you can ask additional questions like, *how did*

it feel? what was the reaction of the people around you? what exactly motivated you to do the act? Keep track of time the time, approximately 7-10 min should be enough.

Sharing

After the visioning is completed, invite the participants to share their experiences in a circle. Let people skip the sharing, if someone feels it is too personal. Stimulate the sharing by additional questions which help analyzing the experiences. Ask, if any of the participants have similar experiences. Do not forget to keep a bit track of time.

Providing material for discussion

Then it can be nice with some additional input about creative activism. In some of our sessions we used a fragment from a lecture done by Stephen Duncombe. The objective of this step is to provide material for a discussion. In order to save time and keep the activity focused, I choose to show only 18 minutes of the material. Ask the participants to watch the video analytically, if necessary (in a group of beginners), prepare specific questions to reflect upon.

Reflecting

Depending from the size of the group, the reflection can be done by all participants together (up to 12 people), or in smaller groups (answering the same questions simultaneously, or doing it in the "global cafe" format). Encourage to share - 1) what in the video they already knew about, 2) something new they found, 3) what they would disagree with - why? 4) what role in the disagreement plays the contextually (the American author): would it work in European context? what makes it different?

If you plan to use the results of the reflection round, document the key points in a visual way.

Tip:

Even though visioning as a method seems a bit like esoteric (to sit in a circle, closing your eyes), it actually opens a new level in the group dynamic - the level of trust in the group rises, people share very personal things, the group is becoming more homogeneous. This exercise requires a sensitivity from the

facilitator to spot, when the participants are following the process and when they are lost and need encouraging questions.

2.2. Defining our social context and our interaction within it

Understanding the personal context and coming to realize how the social climate is shaped by thousands of personal contexts, is one step in defining your possibilities to modify and improve your environment. We as social beings who constantly transmit information. To connect personal and public, through reflection on personal experiences we can achieve an understanding of the complicated structure of the community.

The following methods we found especially suitable for mixed groups, where there is no previously specified shared context or obvious topics of interest. Newly formed working groups who are based around a common topic, but need to investigate about their target audience also can find it useful.

Mapping exercise

Time:

30 mins

Target group:

Beginner

Group size:

Any

Material:

Two different colors of post its, large papers and pencils.

A visual method to develop a vision in together in a group of the current situation and how society react and act.



Draw three concentric circles, like 3 layers on the big paper sheet. Name all the circles, the inner circle will be the the reality, the second circle is about how this reality affects us, and the third one how we react or act.

Give 15 min to the group to reflect about each part of the scheme, starting for the inner circle. First the participants reflect about our reality, the next step is to reflect about how it affects us, and the last to think about how we react to this. Ask the people to write down their ideas about each layer on a post it note and paste the notes in the circles.

Participants can choose two different colors of post its depending on if what they write about is negative or positive. The people have a moment to think and write whatever it is that come to their minds. Invite to share everything from opinions, ideas, stories, slogans to poems, all related with the topic of the circle using the positive/negative colors. As the post its start to appear on the wall, we are quietly building the collective mental map.

To finish the exercise, the group review the collective map together, analyzing the ideas in the post its, taking a look at the positive and negative colors. Now you have an overview of the groups vision of the situation and how the society

react and act.



Visuals by:
Recolectivo

Simulation game - identifying topics

Time:
2 hours

Target group:

Any

Group size:

Any

Material:

Small papers and pens for notes, large paper or a blackboard. Writing equipment to visualise the outcome.

Searching for topics in the group

Ask everyone to personally think of the top three issues/topics which they would be motivated to work on improving. Ask to divide in couples and compare your lists. Try to identify similar topics and invent macro topics. If the group is larger than 10 people, get together in groups of two couples and repeat the process.

Visualization of the results

Visualize the topics on a wall, preferably structured according to the macro topics. Let the participants do that (by post-its, writing notes or any other way), make sure interactive clustering is happening while visualizing (ask the group, what do they think, which topics suit together).

Check out what the macro topics of main concern are in the group. If the group is big, ask people to choose the macro topic they are most interested in and form working groups. For this a simple voting technique can be used - everyone has two dots they can put on the issues they are the most motivated about/engaged with.

Reflection

Share your motivation to work with the issues - ask, why the people would like to work with the concrete issues. Depending from the size of the group, it can be done together, or in smaller groups.

Ask the group/s to share knowledge about initiatives, actions and individuals already working on the concrete issues. Depending from the group and time, it can be done all together, in smaller groups or by using the principle of "global cafe". Add the results sharing to the visual map (let participants do that).

Share in the big group/smaller groups/couples, which of the ideas/actions they find inspiring and what could be repeated.

Tip:

The process of finding macro-topics requires mastering the time management, otherwise its easy to get lost in discussions. As well, depending from the group dynamics and settings, sometimes its nicer to swap groups for different parts of this exercise, but in other cases - it might be too confusing (mainly, if this exercise is just a part of bigger session).

Methods #3: Urging creativity

"Having ideas is very cool"

There are plenty of quotes about the strength, danger and power of ideas - here we look at ways of how to get there. Developing ideas together, how to make space for innovation and creative input. Looking at techniques of how to break the daily thinking patterns and find unexpected combinations of the known. Choosing ideas for implementation, in open group processes and keeping available resources in mind.



Visuals by:
gerbengrotenhuis.com

3.1 Generating ideas

For solid groups it might be possible to sit around a table and write down ideas while having an interesting conversation, but for others, a change of the setting, new rules or techniques can help trigger the creative process. Looking at how to involve the whole group, using the full potential of all members, we aspire to create an active and jolly atmosphere while brainstorming, encouraging to share also "stupid", "impossible" and "irrelevant" ideas.

Empty your brain

Time:

>30 min

Target group:

Any

Group size:

Any

Material:

Paper and pens.



If you empty your brain - there will be more space for new ideas. So lets get everything out of your head onto paper and organize it better!

This method is helpful when you need to start up an idea session, giving your brain a fresh new sheet to start from. It can also be used as a way to structure your thoughts and the tasks gathered in your mind, where the output can be a to-do list or a time-line with tasks mapped to it.

The Empty Brain method is about getting everything out of your head and down on paper so that you can stop thinking about it. It can be done in a group as well as individually. If driven by a facilitator, the role is to be responsible for setting up the method for how to empty the brain. E.g. choose between mind mapping/time-lining/others.

Simply write down everything you have on your mind on paper, do not discriminate between important and less important while writing, you can do that later if you really want to. Let everything from "*remember to buy bread*" to "*contact the band playing tomorrow at the event i am organizing*" be part. After you have emptied your brain, let the notes rest, while you carry on with getting

ideas with a fresh mind. If you want, you can always get back to the notes after you have your new ideas in place, and structure it to a task list, but that is more like a side effect of the exercise.

Visuals by:

Adam Ward (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Tip:

This method comes from the "Project of how" (projectofhow.com). Its worth a visit!

Mind mapping

Time:

30 mins

Target group:

Any

Group size:

Any

Material:

Flipchart papers, Colour pens

This is a visual and effective method both for generating ideas and starting to structure them. It can be used as starting point to create a collective definition or to explore more concrete topics. Mind maps have a common structure composed by a central image of the main idea or concept, and branches with related ideas.

Select *one* idea/topic/issue you want to explore with the group and write it in the middle of a flip chart paper. Ask the participants to write ideas associated to this topic, creating different branches coming from it. When you have several ideas you can start to make connections between your branches or create new branches within the ones created. After some time, when your map have had time to grow, select some of the connections and start a discussion about them. The mind map can be a tool that you can have present during all your sessions/training and you can come back to at any point to refresh your thoughts about the topic. Such a flip chart paper can help you to build understanding among each other and during a discussion or heavy argument can be an efficient tool for better communication.

Mind maps are known for having one idea in the center of attention and this center is where all the branches and thoughts are starting from. We can call this an idea-tree. If you don't have one specific idea in mind but you are thinking about the relation between more ideas, or just want to chart out lots of ideas, we recommend you to draw idea-graphs instead of using mind maps.

Tip:

If the participants have problems finding ideas and make associations, you can ask them questions related with your topic. Example: your topic is "reclaiming the public space" and you can ask them to write down some public spaces they know like the park, the library. This provides a startingpoint for further ideas. Mindmapping is a very well known method and you can find a lot of information and examples about it on the internet,. For example: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind_map. There is an opensource program to create your own digital mind maps (idea trees) called FreeMind: <http://freemind.sourceforge.net> For mapping idea-graphs we can recommend you to use the yEd which is free to use by individuals and available on the web at <http://www.yworks.com>.

Negative brainstorming

Time:

30 mins

Target group:

Any

Group size:

10-20

Material:

Pen and paper.

A method that use brainstorming to generate bad solutions to the problem, and then see how those could be transformed into good solutions.

This can be a fun way to use brainstorming in a silly manner, to work solving problems from a different angle. This method encourages you to explore new solutions through negative thinking. This gives you new angles on plausible

solutions, from using the things you thought were not useful.

Provide the group with pen and paper, and the topic they brainstorm around. In negative brainstorming the group tries to find the worst solutions, and then transforming these into useful solutions. One example could be; A group is tasked with finding solutions to the question 'How could you make children and grand parents understand each other more?'

These are examples of bad solution:

- To build a wall between old and young people.
- To put them in two different buildings so they never meet.
- Make a machine that really distracts the youngsters so they don't want to spend time with the elders.

A transformed bad solution would be:

- Create a retirement home with a kindergarten in the middle. The elders could then come by and help when they have time.

Tip:

This method comes from the "Project of how"
(<http://projectofhow.com/>) Its worth a visit!

Silent brainstorm

Time:

30 mins

Target group:

Any

Group size:

Any

Material:

Large paper sheets, markers in different colors, pens.

This method is especially good with a group of people who tend to speak very much, or where not everyone get to speak equally much. It can also be good to use if during the day there has been a lot of discussion and talks.

Divide in groups of maximum 4 people. Avoid talking during the brainstorm. Each group have a topic for their brainstorm, as for example "Urban games". For 15 minutes the group brainstorm silently on their piece of paper, comment by writing and connect their ideas. After 15 minutes of silent brainstorming, the group can speak and conclude and elaborate the outcome.

Tip:

If you also want to select ideas, you can add the step of circling and marking the most appealing ideas after the discussion

Six thinking hats

Time:

30 mins

Target group:

Any

Group size:

Any

Material:

Six hats, paper hats or pieces of paper of 6 colors: white, yellow, red, green, blue and black.

The six thinking hats exercise by Edward the Bono is a well known method of parallel thinking, where you approach a topic from different perspectives. With this method new questions, problems and ideas arise.

Each group thinks about a topic they want to reflect about. A topic could be for example an action they are planning. The facilitator introduce the "6 thinking hats" and explain what each color means.

The blue hat means process: Thinking about thinking and manage the thinking process. What thinking is needed?

The white hat means facts: Information and data known or needed. Neutral and objective. What do I know? What do I need to find out?

The red hat means feelings: Intuition, gut instinct. My feelings right know, No reasons are given.

The green hat means creativity: Ideas, Alternatives, Possibilities. Express new concepts and perceptions. Solutions to Black problems

The yellow hat means benefits: Optimism and brightness. Exploring the positives and probe for value and benefit. Logical reason are given

The black hat means cautions: Difficulties, Weaknesses,dangers. Logical reasons are given, Spotting the risks.

People from each group choose one hat or color paper and think about the topic using this perspective. The rest of the group can make questions to go deeper in this perspective. The ones who are wearing the color of the hat have to answer their questions using the perspective that the color refers. For example if he is wearing red it has to answer all the questions in an emotional way, thinking about feelings.

The people in the groups are changing and choosing different hats or color papers to get different perspectives and questions about the topic.

There is also the possibility that 2 people from the group take different hats and discuss together about the topic.

Tip:

Depending on the group participants could have the tendency of using one type of hat. Try to encourage groups to use all the colors to get a broaden perspective of the topic they are working with. This method has been created by Edward the Bono in his book "6 thinking hats". You can find a lot of information about this method in internet

Techniques of lateral thinking

Time:

>30 min

Target group:

Any

Group size:

3-10

Material:

Paper and pens to write down ideas

These techniques of lateral thinking help to open your mind to new ideas.

Lateral thinking is solving problems through an indirect and creative approach, using reasoning that is not immediately obvious and involving ideas that may not be obtainable by using only traditional step-by-step logic. The term was coined in 1967 by Edward de Bono.

The random entry point

This method helps you to find new ideas by randomizing your entry point of thinking.

The thinker, or a group of thinkers, choose an object randomly, or a noun from a dictionary. Associate the object or the noun with the area you are thinking about. For example, *you are thinking about how to improve a website. An object chosen at random from the surrounding environment might be a fax machine. Random thoughts on fax machines? A fax machine transmits images over the phone to paper. Fax machines are becoming rare. People send faxes directly to phone numbers. Perhaps this could suggest a new way to embed the web-site's content in emails and other sites.*

Tips: While brainstorming on different nouns, try not to switch immediately to choosing best ideas. When you feel happy/tired enough with rushing over with your bright ideas - find some minutes to run through your creations one by one together to check which of them are liked the best and can be applied.

Provocation

Fit yourselves in small groups and choose one of the Provocation Technics for you to start on: wishful thinking, exaggeration, reversal, escape or distortion. For example, if you aim to engage more people for your student group, - reversal of reasons - why people would not join, can actually help to come up with points you would forget to think about before coming up with decision. Challenging the assumption that people should join at all - escaping it - can help to reveal new possibilities to do your things.

After a group of thinkers created a list of all these crazy provocation, most outlandish ones can be chosen to move forward to new ideas.

Challenge

Asking “Why?” in a non-threatening way is the main idea of this method.

This approach is about finding out why something exists, why it is done the way it is. The result is a very clear understanding of “Why?” which naturally leads to fresh new ideas. The goal is to be able to challenge anything at all, not just items which are problems. For example, *one could challenge the handles on coffee cups. The reason for the handle seems to be that the cup is often too hot to hold directly. Perhaps coffee cups could be made with insulated finger grips, or there could be separate coffee cup holders similar to beer holders.*

Disproving

Place yourselves in smaller groups (3-5 people) and your minds in state of thinking that the majority is always wrong. Your task is to take anything that is obvious, generally accepted as "goes without saying" and question it. Take an opposite view, and try to convincingly disprove it. When the group feels finished with the exercise make a round to sum up conclusions.

Yes-No-Maybe

Time:

1 hour

Target group:

Any

Group size:

Any

Material:

Paper and pens for notes, poster with names of the rounds.

The aim of this exercise is to open the creative thinking, its good warming up activity for the groups before the idea generating and action planning.

The basic idea of the exercise is to propose ideas in the group and get different types of answers (negative, sceptical, encouraging and positive). The results of this exercise also might be already some ideas for actions.

Explaining the exercise

Explain the group the essence of the exercise, give an overview of the sequence of the activities. Explain the rules of each round just before the round, so people can focus on the current round. Try not provide too much of practical examples, because that might limit the imagination.

Dividing in groups

Use a suitable method to divide in groups of 3-5 people. For example, counting 1-2-3-4 in the round, or making a lottery, or asking to close your eyes and choose person, with whom you had the first eye contact after opening eyes (and so on).

"No-" round

The facilitator explains the group rules of the round:

one person offers and idea for an activity (depending from the experience level of the group, it can be directly related to creative activism, related to another topic that is common in the group, or just general free time activity). The next person clockwise says NO - just denies the idea (with or without an argument). This step is to be repeated until everyone in the small group has proposed at least one idea.

The facilitator closes the round, when all the subgroups are done.

"No-but" round

The facilitator explains the group rules of the round:

one person offers and idea for an activity. The next person clockwise denies the idea, but gives an alternative (NO, BUT) This step is to be repeated until everyone in the small group has proposed at least one idea.

The facilitator closes the round, when all the subgroups are done.

"Yes-but" round

The facilitator explains the group rules of the round:

one person offers and idea for an activity. The next person clockwise approves the idea generally, but finds an excuse (YES, BUT) This step is to be repeated until everyone in the small group has proposed at least one idea.

The facilitator closes the round, when all the subgroups are done.

"Yes-and" round

The facilitator explains the group rules of the round:

one person offers an idea for an activity. The next person clockwise approves the idea and suggests an additional activity, or way how to develop the idea (YES, AND). Then the next person clockwise suggests something related to the previous suggestion (YES, AND), the idea can be developed for one or two rounds, or until the group members run out of suggestions. This step is to be repeated until everyone in the small group has started at least one idea.

The facilitator closes the round, when all the subgroups are done.

Optional: Extracting the ideas

The facilitator invites subgroups to note down the ideas from the last round that could be actual ideas for an action. The groups summarise the ideas and can work on some development, if there is time. Then representatives from groups are asked to represent the few ideas (2 min).

Reflection round

The facilitator asks the participants to share their experience through this exercise - which moments were easy, which were difficult and why, what do they learned through this exercise.

Depending from the size of group, the reflection can be for all the group members, voluntary in big group, or in the small groups.

Tip:

This exercise is suitable for very different stages of action planning - it is useful, when you already know the technique (for example, street theatre), or generally warming up the group and gathering ideas about the creative activism.

3.2 Structuring ideas

You might have heard the phrase "Kill your darlings" or "Only the ideas which are put into practice are good ideas". When there is no obvious answer, on how to proceed with the results of a creative brainstorm, some of these methods can be helpful to guide the process further. How to prioritize and select the most popular, random, or realistic ideas and proceed to the phase of realizations.

The impossible is possible

Time:

2 hours

Target group:

Any

Group size:

10-20

Material:

Brainstorm results presented to be visible for the whole group, small stickers or colorful markers (3 contrasting colors like red and green), paper and pens for individual notes.

This is a method that can be used after brainstorming to select ideas for creative acts that will be developed further.

Each of the participants gets stickers or markers in three different colors. They have 6 votes in total, 2 in each category - in the first round 2 colors will be used for the following categories - *most innovative idea*, *the best idea* (each facilitator can choose the categories that suit the group).

The participants can give their votes to the ideas anonymously, one by one, or all together - depending from the size of the group. The facilitators summarize the results of the voting and invite the group to reflect on the result (depending from the size of the group - all together, or in smaller groups).

Analyzing the ideas

First analyze the ideas that did not get any votes

Instead of asking "*Why is this a bad idea?*" ask "*How can we make this idea interesting?*"

The facilitator takes care that during the critical selection the positive side of the arguments are always seen. For example, a participant says "*We will never get local people to participate in this action*" - facilitator can ask "*Ok, so how can we make this idea more interesting to the local audience?*" or another example - a participant says "*this will only attract men*" - a facilitator can ask "*how can we encourage gender balance in the activities?*"

After summarizing the ideas after the critical selection, the facilitator invites people to use their last 2 dots and vote on the ideas again.

Group reflection round

The facilitator asks the group to reflect on surprise moments during the exercise as well as what things did not changed the perspective of the participants.

Tip:

It is a great method to turn the skeptical and critical energy in the group into constructive feedback. However, it would not fit together with the negative thinking brainstorm, because then the method will not be a surprise for the group.

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>

Methods #5: Action



After finding a group of people, identifying a community around it and brainstorming an idea, it will be time to make a plan, of how it will happen. We find it interesting to start with choosing the tactic on how to approach the given situation as well as the suitable technique that can be implemented with the resources existing within the group.

Visuals by:
Jan Lietaert

5.2 Planning actions

Do we agree about how we do this? Are we getting stuck in details, or is this important? How do we facilitate the groupdynamics, and how do we coordinate the different subgroups? And how do we pull it all together and make it happen? These are some of the issues are tackled in the action planning.

Market of topics

Time:

1 hour

Target group:

Any

Collect topics from the group, which they were thinking about during last week. Collect their thoughts on post-it notes and hang them visible on a wall. Divide into sub-groups. In order to do this, set up the room with three type of tools for creative activism and ask the participants to choose the one they felt most connected to. They then divide into three subgroups accordingly. Of course, you can use any means to split the group. Each group will be asked to pick a topic from the „Market of topics“ and plan an action taking into account the context and somehow incorporating the tool which they felt affiliated with.

Tip:

Be aware that people might be uncomfortable with sharing topics they care about if the group and the atmosphere is not good enough for them. Avoid using this method as a complete starter.

Open space technology

Time:

2 hours

Target group:

Any

This is a well known approach a purpose-based leadership, including a way for hosting meetings, conferences and community summit events, focused on a specific and important purpose or task—beginning without any formal agenda, beyond the overall purpose or theme.

We have adapted Open space technology for structuring ideas for actions and planning when to realize them.

First, ask participants to write down their action ideas and their name on papers. The person who write the action idea is going to be the responsible for it. Participants can write as many ideas as they want and, as well, not write any. After everyone finishes, the group start an explanation round where each of participants explain about their idea or ideas. Other participant can ask questions to get more info about them. After the explanation round, people stick their papers on one wall. Now participants read the actions ideas and write down their name in the ones they would like to be involved in, taking into account that they can not be in all of them. When people finish to choose, facilitator presents a timetable with different time slots. The time slots could be from 2 hours. Now is time for each responsible to place their paper with their action idea in one or more time slots, depending how much time they will need to organize and make the concrete action. When the papers are placed, the group together check the timetable and see if everybody agrees on it. If there are disagreements, participants and facilitator try to find a solution together changing things in the timetable.

Tip:

During the part of reading all the action ideas and writing down their names, people usually get really excited and have problems to choose which actions they want to be involved in, ending up in putting their name in so many papers. Remind people to choose the 2 or 3 ideas they like the most and leave the others. The method can seem a bit chaotic at the start but, in our experience, always ended up in a clear working timetable.

Planning an action using a communication process map

Time:

1 hour

Target group:

Any

Group size:

3-10

After presenting creative activism through communication theory (see Methods #1, Explaining creative activism using communication theory), draw the scheme on a big paper. Divide the group in smaller groups, maximum 5 people. Give each group one copy of the map on a big paper. Give them 20 minutes to design their action, concretizing all the aspects that appear in the map. After that groups choose one representative who will explain to the other group the action they have created. These representatives switch groups and tell their new group about the action. The rest of the people in the group are invited to make questions, suggestions and ideas and find improvements. Representatives write down all the new information and come back to their original group to final conclusion. After that action is ready to be implemented!

Tip:

Is important to engage participants not to be shy to make suggestions, ask questions and for clarification to the other group.

Simulation game - game of boxes

Time:

1 hour

Target group:

Any

Group size:

3-10

This game is useful to help beginners to get started in the process of developing an action in a playful way. It also helps to start reflecting about topics that concern the people participating.

Firstly participants individually reflect about three concrete issues that concern or affect them. After 10 min individuals gather in small groups of four or five people. If the group is small, it could be as well in groups of three. The groups share the topics and choose one for the group.

After that we present 3 boxes: in one of them there are folded papers with names of places, for example, university, shopping centre, school, village, etc...; in another one there are folded papers with different target groups: women, kids, consumers, etc...; in the other one there are folded papers with creative activism techniques with an explanation: craftivism, performance, light graffiti, theatre, etc... Each group can choose one paper from each box so they have a topic + a place + a target group and technique to design an action together.

When the groups are ready with their actions you can either provide time for them to go "hands on" and try out the action or directly analyze them in plenary without trying them. In both cases, keep time for groups to present and analyze their action taking in account the different factors (topic, place, target group and technique) and their relations.

Tip:

This method works better if you use it after discovering creative activism methods with video and photo so participants will have already a visual idea of different techniques. Don't forget to add an explanation of the techniques you have in the box and a round of questions before the group start designing. Don't forget to write places close to the workshop space that the group don't have to go far to do the action. You can divide this method in two and use the first part till the design of the action - as closing of the day and the part of experience an action, presenting and analyzing - as opening of the next day.

The 5 Ws and How

Time:

1 hour

Target group:

Any

Group size:

3-10

This exercise use the concept of the "5Ws and How" to analyze all the aspects you have to keep in mind while organising an action - like choosing the better place and time to carry out the action.

Before the exercise prepare six signs: Why, What, Who, Where, When and How.

Divide into 6 groups. Give each person a paper with Why, What, Who, Where, When and How. Ask them to move around and organize themselves in a way so that they show the order of importance or the chronological order you need to answer to each question when you are organizing an action. This will create a discussion: "What comes first, because you need to know what you want to do?", "Why comes first, because you need a reason to do what you do?". Leave some time to discuss and reach an agreement. When they agree, try to challenge their decision with questions that make them reflect about their preconceptions like: "If your action is about changing a neighborhood, then the first one will be "Where", right?" " Do you always have a reason before you start to do something and does your reason change while doing it?"

Tip:

If you cant separate the group in groups of six, it is better to give them the signs to organize them in a table instead of six people hanging a sign and the others looking.

5.3 Analyzing actions

An action is only done after we have had time to reflect about it and share it. These methods has been used to learn from the errors and copy the secrets of sucess from other action groups. Be aware! The reflection can turn into a wild brainstorm for the next action.

Reflecting on practical actions

Time:

1 hour

Target group:

Any

Group size:

3-10

After doing some practical examples of actions (upcycled pots, seedbombs, moss graffiti...) in rotating groups, everyone share how they feel at this moment and how they felt while they were doing the activity. Ask questions to each other about their process and outcomes.

Divide the participants in different groups and give a practical activity to each group. For example, one group need to mould some seed bombs, other to prepare the "paint" for the moss graffiti and other to upcycle some containers into pots. When the activity is finished, ask one person of each group to explain what they were doing. After that give all the participants the opportunity to ask to the others questions about their activity. It will be important that, at some point, you direct the discussion to the implementation of the action with questions like: " Where will you spread the moss graffiti?" " Why would you rather use a moss graffiti than a paint one?" "In which case would you chose a paint graffiti instead of moss graffiti?" " Have you ever thought you can use a fabric bag as pot? What other "container" do you have at your trash bin that you could reuse?" "Where are you planning to throw the seed bombs and why?"

Tip:

If you have enough time you can have rotatory activities so each person can taste all of them and compare.

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Methods #6: Spreading the message



Deciding on the attitude towards spreading the word is one of the basic elements of an action - with this chapter we want to question, how you would like others to see you/ your action group, what is the message of your action and who shall receive it. Here you can find methods related to the topics of media literacy, alternative journalism, media hacking and online security.

Visuals by:
gerbengrotenhuis.com

6.1 Spreading the word

Not mentioning the action is also an action. However you would like to position the activity, it will become a statement - either an anonymous group painting a huge mural, or animal activists giving interviews in the mainstream media about their action, the action still will be a statement itself. We share the experience on what we find important in sharing the word, and give concrete methods and link to ideas on how to create alternative media channels yourself.

Its your action, your message and your show and an opportunity to formulate and voice your opinions in the way you would like to.

Lab experiment: Subversive strategies for distributing a Fanzine

Target group:

Any

Group size:

3-10

We open this "Wall of Knowledge" with the following "Subversive Strategies for actions/projects diffusion" that were conceived and developed during the Madrid MASTA HANDBOOK experimental workshop that took place at Medialab-Prado on January 2014 (<http://medialab-prado.es/article/tallerdeexperimentacionconelmanualdeactivismocreativomasta> English version available by changing the website's language). On the last part of the second session of this 2-day workshop, the 30 participants gathered their minds together with the aim of finding innovative strategies for distributing a fanzine -in this case the collaborative mini fanzine that was created previously during the first part of the workshop. The ideas and reflections aroused are quite universal anyway and can be applicable or adapted to diverse diffusion plans of other kind of actions.

Defining a strategy

There are several ways you can launch onto the outer space your message: may it be intervening in the everyday life or organizing deliberately a big event, by interacting on kindred-places or by occupying 'other' territories...

Since our actions normally take place in public spaces or at least involving other people, we never know what would be exactly the outcome of the action. Nevertheless, it is important you take into account your expectations and desired goals in advance, because from this 'diffusion strategy' might depend the impact of your message.

On a first stage some basic questions, in the same way like when you plan how you will carry out you action, might be helpful in order to find a diffusion strategy appropriate to you action/project:

What is the core of my message? What I pretend to say? /// Who do I want to receive it: wide & diverse part of the society or a concrete target group? /// Which tools/materials are going to be necessary? /// Will I violate any law by placing by message where I am planning to (it could also be the purpose)? /// Do I want to get feedbacks? /// Do I want to track the results? /// Do I want to sell it (in the case of a self-edited material or DIY product)?

During the Fanzine workshop in Madrid, the groups came up with the following strategies:

- - **Everyday's disruption**

The message gets to a wider and heterogeneous audience. It gets introduced on people's routines, quite unconsciously taken and raising people's attention more easily by not expecting to see what they are seeing.

This monotony-break many times acts like a mind-shaking, which potentially will be better remembered and with higher possibilities of being shared within the direct circle of the people who witness the message ("Do you know what happened to me today when walking the dog?")

- - **Kindred-places**

A neighborhood particularly active on participation or social mobilization, one that faces the problematic that we are actually trying to denounce with our action (in this case a fanzine), coffee places/bars, cultural /community centers

and institutions/associations that normally support causes alike, etc.

By using these spaces, we may seek to strengthen not only our message but our 'action network' among active and mobilized agents like us; as well as, being very positive for letting others know our methods, techniques and topics of action, creating a nice exchange of knowledge and allowing other actors to get inspired by our actions.

- - **The 'others' territory**

There is no better vindication than forcing the 'others' facing the reality. The others can be the ones that are actually directly responsible of the problematic we are talking about (politics, companies, particular groups of the society,...), can be the ones that unconsciously are not aware of the problematic, can be groups of the citizenship less active on social participation,...

Hopefully the impact results more shocking than in other situations. With this strategy maybe the chances of people's engagement are lower but higher chances of stirring up controversy and therefore generate a fruitful debate. Even though, there is a risk of reaching people just superficially (people not trespassing the 'stunning' level and not getting the message in depth) depending on our expectation, could be good enough just to bring the topic to the attention of a new social group.

- - **Random spots**

Leaving it up to the fate who and where find it. Maybe filming how the people react when finding, and even making some tracking.

- - **No physical places - The Internet**

Which means we can focus our strategy and distribution on the net. Here is also our choice to choose the tactic of placing our message on 'hostile cyber-territories' or friendly online communities.

In this case the chances to get to wider audiences are obviously big, it allows tracking the results, to create an online network that can make stronger the live participants network, to be shared on social media, etc.

Finding a catchy motto

The use of mottos provides some first-sight information or at least a frame that will contextualize your message. You can, again, decide to be quite clear with your words or, on the other hand, contribute even more with the unexpected situation.

“I am an error” or “I should not be here” were two of the ones suggested for placing the fanzines in locations that none could expect or where it don't belong at all.

Placing it

According to the different strategies mentioned before, the group came up with several possible allocations where they could place this collaborative fanzine that addresses (among other issues related) the problems of housing, consumerism and youth.

Everyday's disruption

- Distributed as a free newspaper at the entrance of the underground.
- The Supplement: so when someone buys her/his daily newspaper or weekly magazine will get a free (and unexpected) supplement.

Of course it also works with free press, store catalogues, supermarket magazines, real state leaflets...

- In mailboxes
- At cash machines (on a Saturday, to make sure it will not be removed till Monday)
- Kindred-places
- Get in touch with supporting local associations or groups of social mobilization
- The 'others' territories
- Advertising: for example placing the motto and link as an ad at the classifieds section of newspapers
- Kiosk intervention: placing as one of the numerous newspapers and magazines sold in the kiosk. How will the owner react when asked: “how much is this fanzine?”.

* This kind of intervention can be applied to bookstores, libraries, etc.

- The Involuntary Subscriber: Create a nice database with the addresses of politicians and relevant decision-makers that need to know about your claim and make sure they receive a copy of your fanzine. Be it one copy or one per day! Let's make sure s/he by interest or curiosity or boredom reads our message! We have to confess this is one of our favorites. Also because, on top of that, you can pick the "Reader of the Month", and dedicate her/him a nice profile on the website with information on why is such a devoted reader of the fanzine and why s/he became an involuntary subscriber.
- The Internet
- Create a website/microsite. There you can include a Forum for debates generated with the fanzine, update the new followers with new fanzines or new distribution points...
- Download (by direct link, QR code, in a USB flash drive embedded into a wall, a building or computers on public places like a library)
- Mapping (where the fanzines were found, where are they travelling...)

Making a Fanzine

Collaboratively creating a Fanzine as an Action.

Prepare different working spaces, according to the techniques you plan to use. This can be for example a collage area, typewriter area, scanner area e.t.c.

Each person write some of their ideas for topics for the Fanzine on small papers. We mix together all the proposals.

Depending on the size of your group, divide it in subgroups with 4 or 5 people in each.

Each group take 2,3 or 4 topics to work with, when creating the Fanzine.

Start to create! The groups go through the different areas to create the fanzine, exploring the techniques, and the materials.

At some point of the session, exchange the fanzines between the groups, so they continue working on the other Fanzines. Each group can intervene in the other Fanzine. In this way all the Fanzines will be created by the whole group.
