XR Principles of Inclusivity

Disablity Access Training | Disabled Rebels Network | June 2023

In order to build an inclusive approach towards involving all sections of society in the struggle to highlight the Climate Emergence, it is necessary for XR to pay particular attention to five activity areas:

- Organisation and running of meetings
- The production of documentation – including leaflets
- Accessibility of the XR websites
- Accessibility of demonstrations and other activities
- Good practices when communicating with disabled people

Please also read Diversity and Inclusivity at XR Actions when planning an action.

Dyslexia Friendly Style Guide

What is inclusivity?

An inclusive product, service or environment does not exclude any section of society. Inclusive solutions consider all users and participants, including disabled people, and is a positive step towards a holistic, universal system.

The Principles of Inclusivity

Link to the original and full XR Principles of Inclusivity document written by members of the Disabled Rebels Network

- Individuals have unique and particular needs in learning, social and campaigning environments.

- Respect each individual's right to express and present themselves relative to their religion, culture, ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disabilities.

- Promote inclusivity by reasonably adjusting procedures, activities and physical environments.

- Focus on the learning or support needs of the individual without assumptions or labels.

- Be inclusive in all forms of communication.

- Serve all with sensitivity, respect, and within boundaries of social justice.

Organisation and running of meetings or activities

When considering an accessible and inclusive meeting, there are three aspects you need to think about:

1. Planning and preparation
2. The equipment and information
3. The conduct of the meeting.

1. Planning - Choosing a Venue

When considering whether a venue is accessible, the first thought may be to avoid entrances with steps. There are many other aspects to consider or options that you can provide to make the venue accessible. **The information below covers a variety of suggestions however it doesn't cover every aspect.** You will also need to think about different religions / faiths, backgrounds and cultures, e.g. different faiths have specific approaches to alcohol, as well as considering if attendees might be in recovery and possibly won't attend if alcohol is being served on the premises - the best practice is to consider your potential attendees / rebels and if after reading this guide you're unsure of their needs, please search the internet for information:

- Is there a barrier-free pathway to the meeting space?

- Is it easy to reach the meeting space from public transportation? Many disabled people rely on public transportation to get around.

- Have someone stand by the main entrance to direct people to the meeting room and help those needing assistance. This is a courtesy that everyone will appreciate.

- Is there adequate parking, including disabled parking?

- Is there an accessible toilet nearby?

- Consider door width, sharp corners, wheelchair ramps, access to parking for anyone with limited mobility, angle of slopes, toilets, background noise levels, lighting, clear signage.

- Consider the size of the venue in relation to the number of wheelchair users expected to attend. Space is required for wheelchairs to be manoeuvred. As a general guide allow two spaces for every wheelchair user.
- Arrange the seating so that wheelchair users have a choice of where they sit.

- Consider lighting levels for people with visual impairments, as low lighting is a barrier.

- Consider the availability of induction loops or arrange reserved front seating for attendees who are hard of hearing.

- If you have been unable to get an ideal venue, plan how you will overcome issues to accommodate individuals, e.g. arranging help to get people down slopes.

- Consider whether there are crèche facilities if these are required or whether childcare/carer's expenses can be paid as an alternative.

- Brief the Venue staff regarding your needs, including numbers and access requirements.

- If you can, check the accessibility of a venue for yourself. Not only can you then be confident with what you are saying, but you can also answer enquiries more accurately.

2. Providing Information and Equipment

- The date and time for a meeting may influence who is able to come.

- The timing of a meeting may also affect people's availability. Those with caring responsibilities may find early starts difficult and those with childcare may need to be home to collect children.

- You should consider your audience and whether you are able to provide expenses or resources for individuals requiring personal assistants, those with caring responsibilities (children and adult) or those with transport costs. Notice periods should be as far forwards as possible to enable people to make arrangements for transport, personal assistance and replacement care.

- On any notices or publicity used for the event, it is important to ensure you use the phrase: "If you require any specific requirements please inform (state a contact by phone, email and preferably address too). This allows people to explain any access/dietary needs (dietary needs may be influenced by faith, health or philosophy).

- Individuals find different formats of information easier to manage. These include large type, Braille, computer disc, audio CD. It is important if you are providing information in a particular format for an individual that you ask which is appropriate for them and not make assumptions.

- Try to use plain English without jargon in all documents including advertising. Consider your community and whether it would be useful to provide written information in different languages.

- If using a loop, check when booking, the area that the loop covers. Check before the meeting that the loop is working.

- If sign language interpreters, lip speakers and deaf blind interpreters are needed, check well in advance for cost and availability.

- It is useful to hold a briefing meeting for speakers to remind them to use microphones/talk through slide presentations etc.

3. Conduct - During the meeting

- Ensure those at reception are briefed on issues. If sighted guides are available they should be dedicated members of staff and should be on hand.

- If using PowerPoint presentations or other visual information, ask if people can read it. Don't assume people will read the slides: talk through the information. Have printed copies available.

- At the start of the meeting, raise your hand to attract people's attention. Check access e.g. whether people can hear; if the loop is working; if the people can see and read the PowerPoint slides; if they can see the sign language interpreters.

- When using a microphone, speakers should generally speak close to the microphone and preferably have an opportunity to practice using microphones prior to the event.

- If using a loop, then all speakers must use the microphone including those responding to questions. If the questioner is not within the looped area then the question needs to be repeated using the microphone.

- Even when a loop is not being used, it is good practice to employ a roving microphone. This might seem to slow down proceedings however often it enhances the authority of the Chair and aids the discipline of the meeting thus saving time.

- Allow time for breaks in the meeting. This is important for individuals but also for signers and lip speakers. Signers need a break every 15-20 minutes and if your meeting or event is longer than 75 minutes a break of 15 minutes is recommended.

- Time keeping is essential. Inform people of when to expect the meeting to end and when breaks are.

The Production of Documentation – Including Leaflets

Here are some tips on good practice:

- Offer a good contrast between print and background (e.g. black/blue on white/yellow)

- Avoid glossy or thin paper

- Avoid light type weights and unusual typefaces

- Keep information as concise as possible with short sentences and paragraphs

- Avoid printing text in capitals

- Provide even word spacing and justify text to the left

- Provide 'navigational' aids for the reader (e.g. content lists, clear headings, titled illustrations in appropriate places.)

- Ensure text documents have been generously spaced

- Leave enough space between columns to make sure that text flows easily from column to column

When considering lay-out and design for posters and leaflets (as well as the points above):

- Avoid over-elaborate layouts, especially, placing words on top of photographs or drawings

- Highlight where the focus of the information can be found

- Ensure large and clear fonts are used such as Karla >>>Download here<<<

- Ensure the numbering and symbol protocols are kept simple and understand that some characters are difficult to tell apart for those with visual impairments, e.g., 3 and 8, 6 and 9, O and 0, S and 5, iv and vi?

Take care to avoid, where possible:

- Words split over lines
- Italics
- Underlining
- The capitalisation of whole sentences
- Narrow line spacing, narrow margins and dense text
- Faint print

General Good Practice in Communication and Information

Written Communication:

- Ensure that the letterhead and contact details are in clear, large, lowercase print

- Ensure that the subject of the poster/leaflet is clear, and that the header makes sense

- Avoid jargon or metaphorical/figurative language

- Avoid acronyms - where they are necessary, state them fully first

- Avoid adverbs and adjectives, they make sentences harder to follow

- Write short sentences with subject and object

- Use the present tense as much as possible

- Try not to use passive expressions: "We offer two services" is easier to understand than "two services are offered"

- Make the purpose of the letter/leaflet/booklet clear in the first sentence.

- At the end of the letter summarize what action you will take and what action the recipient must take

- Ensure that the contact person and their 'phone number are clear, and in large print

- Where a mixture of graphics and text is used, make sure the layout is clean and avoids confusion

- Ensure that the graphics do not encroach upon the text, ensure that the graphics add to the understanding

- Make sure there is a large print footer saying where and in what other formats you can get the information

- Use sans serif fonts (such as Arial and Calibri - or Karla for some XR flair) and ensure the font is at least 14 point or equivalent

Audio information:

Audio information is especially important for people with a visual impairment, dyslexia, learning difficulties, non-English speakers and people who struggle to understand maps; non-disabled people may also find it reassuring and helpful.

Etiquette for producing your own audio CD: use people with clear speaking voices. Give an introduction and a summary e.g. this is an annual report of 20 pages. Have gaps between sections; state page number at appropriate points so that people can retrieve information; give contact details at the end; if pictures are important to the text describe them. Allow time for taping to be done in stages so that the reader does not sound bored.

Accessibility of the XR websites: Accessible website design

Text:

Use a sans serif typeface, like Karla as it is easier to read. A large font equivalent to Karla 14 is a good size – the alternative is to have a **Large Print** button at the top of the home page.

The text should be colour-contrasted with its surroundings – like black/white, yellow/blue, green/white. Many visually impaired people find it easier to read reverse coloured text – e.g. white characters (#FFFFFF), on racing green (#006600) background

The visited links colour should be a different colour and shade, so that people with colour-blindness or other visual impairments can distinguish it.

Images:

Pictures/pictograms/icons help many people with learning disabilities, but can be a hindrance to people using voice software like Hal/Supernova (text-reader software). Where pictures are included, make sure the alt tags say what they are or what they do (e.g.: click here for Toyota cars)

Frames:

Do not use them!.

Tables:

Tables are inaccessible for many with visual impairments and some screen readers. If tables are necessary, provide both a caption and a summary of its contents.

Forms:

Web-based forms can usually be read by text readers, but it's worthwhile including a "print" button, for people who can't use the online version.

Document downloads:

Ensure documents are available as both a Word document and as a PDF.

Structure:

Make sure website pages have a clear and logical structure.

- Avoid clutter
- Keep the homepage as simple as possible
- Pay particular attention to how you map out the site – the fewer clicks for a person to get to the information they want, the better

Accessibility of demonstrations and other activities

There have always been disabled people engaged in political activities but never to the extent that they are today. It is not possible or practical for organisers of demonstrations or certain other political activities to consider the access needs of all the disabled individuals who may want to take part. Disabled people for their part equally need to understand that with rights come responsibilities and this includes their own safety. Nevertheless in order to be able to make informed choices as to whether or not they can participate, disabled people require as much information as is possible to give.

Disabled people would find it useful to know for example:

- Details of a meeting place (nearest stations, bus routes, parking, etc)
- Agreed route of any marches and their lengths
- Details of a rallying place (nearest stations, bus routes, parking, etc)
- If disabled people are to form a separate contingent that the lead disabled people are able to liaise with identifiable stewards in case or changes in plans or possible emergencies.