

Preparing for new rebels

- Why do we need new rebels?
- How do we genuinely welcome everyone?
- What does an Integrator do?

Why do we need new rebels?

For a movement that aims to mobilise 3.5% of the population, that seems like a daft question! However, it can be useful to think about why we need new people beyond just the obvious.

New rebels are the lifeblood of every team

We know we need numbers to win. We may think about it less, but we also need the energy, skills, ideas, community connections, diversity and fresh perspective new rebels bring us. Last but not least, we need our stretched coordinators to be able to take a break sometimes!

Sometimes it can seem like bringing new rebels into our groups just creates work. Maybe the team is very busy and has experienced inducting a rebel who quickly left again. At times like these, it is tempting to think "oh, we'll just do it all ourselves".

However, if we close ourselves in this way, it can easily lead to a downward spiral. Without a continual flow of new people, the team ends up consisting of experienced but very stretched people with no time to show others how to do things. Then, when one of those experienced people needs to step back, things can really go wrong. A healthy group has a mix of people of all levels of experience, with a steady flow of newbies learning, moving on to more complex work, showing others how to do things and relieving the more experienced coordinators of work.

Setting the tone

Before you even start recruiting or doing outreach, think about how you will look after the people when they arrive. New people will need extra care and attention at the start (typically for around a month). It is best that coordinating this work falls to someone who is not frazzled from doing a ton of other things and typically this will be the team's integrator.

This does *not* mean it is the integrator's job alone to make new people feel welcome! This is a job for *everyone* in the team.

Of course, no one can guarantee that your rebels will stick with you, but there are some things you can do to make it more likely. We had a People's Assembly and asked why people stayed. These answers came up the most:-

- we felt **appreciated**
- we felt **part of a community**
- we thought XR was **effective**

And we really felt part of XR when:-

- we **got to know people**

- we **worked together** on something
- we **got to know XR**
- we **gained a role** in our team

So, drawing from this, the kinds of things which encourage people to keep coming back include:-

- a friendly, non-cliquey environment where group members avoid XR jargon, take the time to explain things, check understanding and listen to the views and experiences of the new person;
- a named 'buddy' who will look after the new person, answer questions and help them settle in;
- asking if the new person has anything they need to take part or feel comfortable and trying to meet their needs wherever possible (see also [Supporting your New Rebel](#) and [How do we genuinely welcome everyone?](#));
- a tangible project the whole group can work together on;
- a role, or maybe some simple task to start with, for the new person;
- connections to people, projects or training you know the new person will find interesting; and
- evidence of the impact of the things you are doing (e.g. getting your local council to declare a climate and ecological emergency, getting good press coverage, having a successful event where you bring in more people etc).

If you can provide these things, then you will have gone a long way to making a supportive and welcoming environment for the new rebels who arrive in your group.

How do we genuinely welcome everyone?

Principle 6: we welcome everyone and every part of everyone.

We need to build inclusivity and accessibility into our teams from the outset. Have a look at the following resources to see how your team could become more welcoming and accessible.

XR's **Disabled Rebels Network** have produced the following resources:

- **XR Principles of Inclusivity**
- **Diversity & Inclusivity at Actions**
- **Inclusivity-disability Resources Pack**

There is also a wealth of practical advice on the **We are Everyone** page of the toolkit.

XR's **Co-liberation group** has produced a **library** of resources relating to oppression of all kinds.

Principle 7: we actively mitigate power.

Here are some ways we can try to balance out who holds the 'power' in our teams so that everyone's voice is heard:-

- weighting coordinating roles towards marginalised groups;
- including issues and voices normally ignored in our meetings and messaging;
- rotating who holds positions of responsibility;
- embedding anti-oppressive practice into our training materials;
- forging alliances with grassroots movements of marginalised people;
- improving our awareness of personal privileges; and
- always tackling harmful behaviour or language when it arises.

Rare exceptions

There are a few rare cases where you might not be able to include someone, i.e. if their needs are beyond what you can reasonably meet, or if they risk causing harm to other people (see *'Supporting your new rebels'*).

What does an Integrator do?

It can be slightly overwhelming joining XR - so much to learn, so many new faces, all that XR jargon and even a new structure to work around. And this is on top of the anger, frustration or desperation we feel because we face the Global catastrophe of climate change as a result of systemic injustice and racial inequality, the effects of which are already being felt all over the world. It can be a lot to process.

And sometimes we forget to welcome new Rebels into XR, simply because we are often so involved in a project which is taking all our time and attention.

For this reason, we should have an Integrator in each of our teams and Local Groups (LGs) - to welcome new Rebels and to make sure that existing Rebels are finding their way on their journey through XR.

Check out the Rebellion Academy Module [Working Group roles](#) for some videos about being an Integrator.

Standard Integrator mandate

Purpose: to make sure that team/LG members are flourishing and productive and that the team/LG has members to fill its roles and support its workload.

Mandate:-

- inviting new members to join the team or LG roles;
- onboarding / inducting / orienting new members into the team/LG roles;
- keeping a list of team members up-to-date;
- requesting your group admin / tech champ adds new members to the Hub, as required;
- checking in with team members about their fit with roles, projects and the team generally;
- suggesting improvements to who fills roles if necessary'
- if a transformative conflict process does not resolve an issue and if it is in the team's best interests, asking someone to leave the team (*rare circumstances*); and
- for groups with a Volunteer Website account, managing the group account on the website, posting roles, dealing with role applications.

Different teams break this down differently (for example, you might have one person handling recruitment and a different one for onboarding) but someone will need to be responsible for each of the tasks listed above. Work out who will do what ahead of time so that everyone is clear what to expect.

Not got a team Integrator?

Then this is the first role to recruit for! You may think this person would need to know your team inside out in order to welcome others; but really the most important thing is for them to be friendly, empathetic and willing to learn as they go along. Sometimes, it even helps for the integrator to be recently new so that they can use their own experience to help others. There are lots of resources on this toolkit to help them.

Cautionary note: *if you are using the volunteer website to recruit, it is important you get to know a new Integrator before giving them login details to your group account since this is a position of great trust and involves handling sensitive personal data.*