

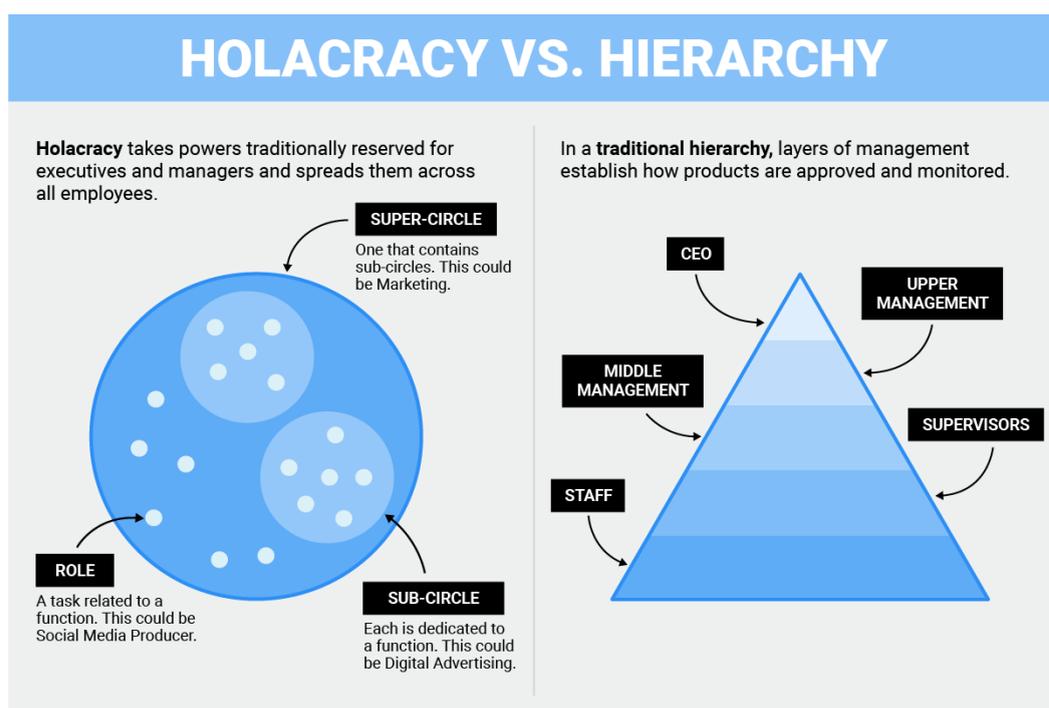
## How to start a student group for Extinction Rebellion

The UN Secretary General has given the planet two years to radically change carbon emissions and ecological destruction if we want to salvage our future on this planet. By 2040, we are looking at huge swathes of uninhabitable lands, hundreds of millions of climate refugees and an ever changing unpredictable climate that will kill millions. This is an escalating crisis and thus it requires escalating action. We need to move fast.

The student movement has been at the heart of system change for decades such as in the women's liberation movement and the civil rights movement which were fought for tooth and nail in the 1960s. Students have a strong community to organise in and can lead the way for radical action, which is why we and more importantly the planet needs your help.

This means taking key demands to our student unions and University, asking them to rebel against our mad political system. It means being serious about our future and the steps we are willing to take to protect it. Creating disruption, occupying buildings and going on strike. We have a range of historic tactics at our disposal and we can utilise them in the current crisis. The student community is interconnected, across the UK and internationally, and there is common need and desire to fight for justice and our collective future. Now, more than ever, connecting with that community and challenging the narrative around our environment is crucial.

This is a first draft and future iterations of this briefing will give more grounded information based on feedback over the coming weeks and months –as is the agreed in **holacracy inspired** process of Rising Up (which is the group organising Extinction Rebellion) – i.e. decisions and developments being made by semi-autonomous groups on the basis of gaining feedback from other people.



You can find out more about [Rising Up HERE](#)

## How to start?

First things first, students need to start establishing groups across the UK. A good way to start this is with a talk (Template script [here](#)) on the University campus to gauge initial interest, and start to build numbers. Communicating with existing groups will contribute to this. It is important to recognise that we're not going to win everyone over but that the small numbers that are initially mobilised can snowball the movement through dedicated action. Additionally, not all groups need to be 'Extinction Rebellion Bristol' for example. If there are existing groups with that are keen to get going with this then just go for it. E.g If a university environment society wants to get involved, there is no need to start from the ground up building an Extinction Rebellion (XR) group!

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has - Margaret Mead*

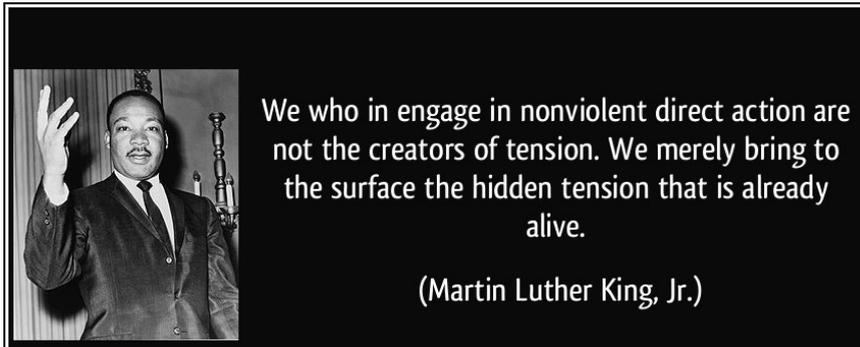
Next, the group needs to be trained in how to take effective nonviolent action. This can be done by organising a training session with XR (Training template [here](#)). After that, or simultaneously depending on confidence levels, groups need to start taking action on campus. Simple starters like stickering and putting up posters can help to build relationships in the group and spark a culture of mischief. Regular events can also be run such as film screenings and handing out flyers for upcoming events.

The group should have an initial Facebook group & page to communicate about upcoming actions and events.

## Next steps

Power concedes nothing without a demand. Once established the group should put forward a motion to the student council which outlines the key demands of the rebellion and gets the Union to officially support it. This text will be drafted soon... Alternatively, the Unions are essentially run by their sabbatical officers so if you can get one of them on side as soon as possible then you're on a winning track. [WE NEED TO PROVIDE MORE INFO ON HOW YOU PUT A MOTION TO THE STUDENT COUNCIL HERE] [What is the student council?](#)

Getting an article in student press about what the group is doing is a good start to gauge interest. **Even better is an action.**



An action such as a road block on campus or chalk spray on University buildings (on glass it can be easily washed off) is a great way to start building momentum. This will create controversy. Doing something out of the ordinary which is clearly visible will put some off your message and win others to you. Making this action colourful and creative is a sure fire way into the student press and beyond.

Actions are crucial if things are(?)n't working out on the conventional track. The Student Union members/ reps may vote against the motion. At which point it is time to spark a debate within the wider community. This can be done by doing an action at the SU e.g occupying. Many SUs in the UK have become politically inactive in the neoliberal era. Like 1968, this needs to be challenged to its core- how can unions act in the favour of students if they are part of a system which is constructing their future misery? [This is confusing, I get that referring back to 1968 is a good way of grounding student stuff historically, but the context is entirely different and here it reads as if you are saying the '68 protests were against neoliberalism]

Once the union is on side it is time to challenge upwards through the University (mobilising staff, demand policy change etc), connecting with other unions and using the union power to mobilise greater numbers on campus. [ Maybe I am cynical, but having a process that has to culminate in the SU coming on-side seems unhelpful, they are deeply embedded within our system and I don't think approaching it as though we will always get SU's on-side is the best plan. Maybe needs a little more regarding escalation of pressure on the SU? Or ways of challenging their power within the university/going over their heads? ]

## Meetings

These are crucial for getting shit done and they are often run badly. Good facilitation, hand signals, minutes and a space for sharing thoughts/feelings/ideas greatly improve meetings.

### **General Meeting – set agenda:**

There are weekly General Meetings

A provisional standard agenda based upon previous meetings is as follows:

Welcome to the meeting (start the meeting about 10-15 minutes after the official start time of 7pm)

1. Ask people to share their food and drink by putting it in the centre of the circle.  
Having a joint meal beforehand is great.
2. Split people into groups of 3 to introduce themselves to each other and to share why they have come to the meeting and how they feel about the climate and ecological crisis. (10 minutes)
3. Come back together and briefly go around and have people say their names.

**Introduction to Rising up** – the points to be made are:

*Rising up is a decentralised network of passionate people who believe in taking non violence direct action as an effective means to creating a just future.*

*They/we organise with trust and compassion and believe that history shows us disobedient behaviour can create positive change.*

*We do research into how to create radical political change and use this research to create effective campaigns on social and environment issues (mention some of them).*

*We are now using this experience to build a rebellion on the climate crisis.*

*We are building towards regenerative culture. There are a few rules, and living documents about process, protocol and purpose so we are always evolving.*

*One important rule is that we don't call each other out in public, online or in writing. If we need to speak to people about any personal feelings we do that face to face wherever possible, or by personal phone call.*

*Another important thing to remember is that to be a good organiser does not mean taking on lots of tasks, it just means being fully responsible for them so if you take on too much just make sure you can let a couple of people know and they will try to redistribute the work so we don't grind to a halt, and you don't feel under pressure. No judgement on this, we are all volunteers!*

*The organisational style is holocratic. This basically means that people form working groups in specialised areas, with certain responsibilities to do things. They are trusted to get on with the work in whatever way they feel is best with no top down control. This creates a creative space for people to take control of their own work and find their own dynamics with those they work alongside. In this way we also describe it as a "post-consensus" way of working; you don't have to ask permission from the whole group, you can just get on with things whilst keeping regular contact with a manageable number of people you work with.*

*We think that burnout often happen when we get over committed to an attachment to definite outcomes. With this in mind we aim to love the process of change-focused work, and reflect on the sacrifices we make in our own lives to make this work possible, which we enjoy and learn from. We live in a morally reprehensible system which disregards life and causes great inequality and suffering, acting to combat that it us meaning and is a reward in itself*

*We welcome everyone and every part of everyone, and we aim to recognise our own privilege and work to balance power between ourselves. We do and will make mistakes, things will be imperfect and chaotic at times - that's real life - but we are continually trying to learn and move forward. So thanks everyone for getting involved - it's going to be an adventure!*

Then Extinction Rebellion making the following points:

*There is no way to adequately speak about the depth of the threat of social collapse and extinction due the abrupt climate change which is now happening – but the XR presents a collective decision to take realistic action rather than simply despair and suffer and rage alone and in silence*

*The climate situation is as we all know a dire threat to our lives and loved ones – we are at 1.2C above the pre industrial baseline and already built in processes such as the melting of the arctic ice and the carbon lag – CO2 released but yet to create higher temperatures, are set to take us over 2C in the next decade or so. This will create weather chaos – an international food and water crisis and thus war, mass starvation, and tens of millions of refugees. After 2C we have a serious possibility of methane release and the die back of the amazon which would destroy our civilization and lead to mass extinction include that of the human race. So we are adults - we need to face facts and we are here tonight to take our responsibilities seriously take whatever nonviolent action which is now necessity to stop the suicidal madness of present political system. Thank you for being so brave and courageous! The XR rebellion aims to create a national debate on what the hell is really happening on the climate situation by creating mass disruption and undergoing personal sacrifice in November – this will involve affinity groups – support groups for people doing direct action – which will block transport infrastructure and occupy and painting central government buildings . There will a declaration of Rebellion on the 31<sup>st</sup> October. 2 weeks of direct action will happen on from the 12<sup>th</sup> and there will be a mass act of civil disobedience on the 17<sup>th</sup> which could lead to occupy-style general uprising. **[Do members really believe this?]** All this will be repeated on an international scale from Mid March next year.*

*It also has set demands of the UK government - that it takes emergency action and undertakes a WW2 style national mobilisation to deal with this threat to the existence of our society – this includes reducing carbon emissions to zero by 2025, massive research and investment in removing CO2 from the atmosphere, a national plan to transform transport housing, transport and consumption to what is genuinely ecologically sustainable. The plan is to create a national assembly of ordinary people to come up with a detailed plan and oversee this process as the political system we have at the moment had been captured by corporate interests and cannot be trusted to act in the interests of the country. The plan is for a coordinated demand for these changes to be made in other countries around the world.*

*There is a national network of working groups as well as local organisations springing up in cities and towns around the country. In London we have a coordination group to deal with the overall organisation of the mobilisation and organise these meetings – and we are*

*developing three working groups at present – actions, promotion, and art working groups. In addition we have four affinity groups in the West, South West, North, and South East parts of the city which are promoting the rebellion and recruiting people in those areas of the city to take part in direct action in November.*

*As mentioned in what was said about RU – the idea is that people take the initiative – it is your rebellion – we are just creating the space for this to happen. As long as your idea is compatible with the rebellion – ie nonviolent and promoting its aims then you should do it – just checking with 2-3 other people – we have a massive mobilisation job to do in 6 weeks so just go for it.*

*See the document – XR briefing for more details on what I have just told you.*

4. Have two people go through:

- The actions which are coming up and roles which need to be filled
  - The talks and promotions activities which are coming up and the roles which need to be filled
5. Have any questions on this but keep the conversation short and to the point and limit it to 5-10 minutes stating this beforehand (sometimes you get people who want to dominate this space).
  6. Then split into two working groups – actions and promotions (and arts if enough people and/or specific interest in this)
  7. Two people facilitate each break out group –
  8. go round on people's background and interests – their skills and network contacting (involvement in other groups etc)
  9. Run through activities which need to be sorted out
  10. Go round with people saying with each activity if they can help with that – this is minuted as an action point or AP.
  11. People discuss other ideas they have and an action points are minuted
  12. Name, tel ,email ,facebook, name, area and network contacts/skills of each person is put on a spread sheet on a laptop which is passed round and added to the general database after the meeting.
  13. The minutes are emailed to everyone within 24 hours -
  14. Come back together after 20-30 minutes
  15. Final go round – how do you feel now about XR and your role in it
  16. Distribute leaflet posters and stickers.
  17. Finish formal meeting – 10 minutes for one to one conversations about various practicalities
  18. And then go to pub for informal chats etc.

**Notes organisers of these meeting need to**

- Sort out the venue – time and day
- Sort out a Facebook page and make sure all the people on the London database of informed of the meeting

- Sort out two facilitators for the meeting – one to keep check on times. They introduce each part of the above meeting format. They should aim to get their 15 minutes early to go through the agenda details.
- Sort out ideally two other people to do the slots on RU and XR and then run through the jobs of the working groups
- Make sure two facilitators for the break out groups – again one to check the time – ideally who are already involved in those working groups
- Bring along – posters leaflets and stickers to distribute – along with a “[XR briefing](#)” doc for each person.

For more info on how to organise locally check out our [coordinators pack](#)