



EXPERIENCE

A polite display of power

It was a very simple action to perform. We searched the city for a dangerous pedestrian crossing, which was not controlled by traffic lights.

“What kind of traffic can block traffic?”

We brought about a hundred friends and acquaintances who shared our idea of taking back the streets. For around ten minutes, or perhaps less, we crossed the road, without giving way whatsoever. The consequences: the traffic got jammed, and only public transport, pedestrians or bikes could proceed; noise and exhaust concentration on the street quickly soared above normal, stressing the poor living conditions which car traffic creates. Thus bringing attention to the problems linked with the sustainability of such a widespread use of private vehicles in an urban context.

The question which this action asks is: “What kind of traffic can block traffic?”

The answer: “We want city centers dedicated solely to public transport, bike traffic and pedestrian transit. Keeping in mind respect for those who are obliged to work with means of transport.”

Here are the 10 steps, which helped us perform the action.

1. We chose an **appropriate location**: an apt pedestrian crossing, with no traffic lights.
2. We organized the **logistics** and made several on-the-spot surveys to consider timing and necessary human resources.
3. We **designed the action project** dividing the participants in four groups, each led by a coordinator, who had been previously given instructions on how to communicate with the central organization (in case of ambulances or such urgencies, in a nearby building organizers above the scene would alert via mobile).
4. We **announced the action on the Meetup** (pointing out precise location and time of meeting point) widely ahead of schedule in such a way to get the word around, and make the Meetup memberships rise in number, thanks to new people taking interest.
5. Each one of us **sent invitations to friends** via email, sms, and using personal contacts in social networking portals (MySpace, Facebook), which led to meeting more interested people in the territory; we also created an event on the Traffic Kills Facebook group page, to reach a higher number of participants.
6. Through the Meetup we set up a team, trying as much as possible to be backed up by organizations or associations which support similar intents. This allowed our **voice and network to grow** a great deal.
7. We created a **video and photo team** thanks to enthusiasts, as so to have documentation of the event.
8. We **announced the action to journalists**, especially throughout dialogue with the ones most sensitive to the issues and initiatives linked to social and environmental order. Their support helped to get people to subscribe to the Meetup and to take part in the action after reading about it on the newspapers.
9. Performing the action was quite simple: once the **groups began intersecting each other and occupying the whole crossing**, the game was ours. Two groups started from one side of the road, the other two from the opposite side. In our case, our big number didn't allow any gaps to form, but hadn't we been so many, I think that we could have compensated by maintaining precise distances.
10. Once the action had been performed, we gathered all video and photographic material and **spread the news locally to newspapers**, whilst the Community allowed us to reach out internationally.