

# FROM THE GROUND UP

toolkit for a Green New Deal



**ORGANIZE A COMMUNITY  
STREET MURAL**

**GREENPEACE**

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**“THE ROLE OF THE  
ARTIST IS TO MAKE THE  
REVOLUTION IRRESISTIBLE.”**

**–TONI CADE BAMBARA**

**Use art as a catalyst for action. Reclaim, co-opt and beautify public space for the common good!**

Get involved by organizing a public mural in your city or town. Engage your friends, family and local community. Together we can paint a network of murals across Canada to highlight the diversity of voices that want action on the multiple crises we face, the urgency with which we need to act, and the solutions we need for a better, safer future for all of us.

**Let's show our politicians with our art that it's time for a visionary plan for a Green New Deal for Canada.**



**Watch the [Greenpeace Mural Painting Timelapse!](#)**



# THE OBJECTIVE

**#1 Movement Building:** Murals bring people together. These murals will represent the coming together of diverse people in local communities in support of an ambitious plan for Canada. Collaborative painting will help us connect, share ideas and visions for a better world, and build skills to strengthen our groups and communities to build a more powerful movement.

**#2 Inspiration & Storytelling:** An experimental creative event may better reach, excite, and engage our communities and the world beyond us. Art can help amplify our most powerful weapon for change - the stories of our communities, how we are impacted by an unjust system, and our positive solutions for change.

**#3 Challenge our politicians:** These murals will act as a call to action. Images from across Canada will be shared with our political leaders to show that people are uniting for climate action and a Green New Deal.



*Thunderbird street mural in front of Wells Fargo in San Francisco, designed by Christi Belcourt, Isaac Murdoch & David Solnit. Photo courtesy of Kelly Johnson of <https://www.kellyjohnsonrevolutionaryphotography.com/>*

The art you choose for your mural is important. This is the vision or inspiration you want to share with the world. Words are of course powerful, but an image can often help to **communicate information with more impact, capture people's attention or put across complex topics.** Don't we say that an image is worth a thousand words ?

You have a few options. Choose the option which works best for your project:

**#1 Design a mural** collaboratively with your local group, community or organizing team. This is the best way to get people excited and have your mural representative of many people!

**#2 Contract a local artist** to design something for your group to use.

**#3** Use the **Greenpeace design**. You can make it your own by selecting the colours and location. We have commissioned [Manar Hossain](#), designer, illustrator and creative based in Toronto to design a beautiful and powerful image that Greenpeace supporters can duplicate to create a street mural in their community. [Download here.](#)

## Consider the following questions in your design:

- Who is your audience?
- What do you want to communicate?
- Are you telling a story?
- What imagery did you want to use?
- What shape will you work with?
- What's your location? How big will your mural be?
- What colour(s) are you using?
- How many people on your organizing team?
- How many people will be painting?



# MAINTAINING INDEPENDENCE IS YOUR MURAL PLANNED DURING AN ELECTION PERIOD?

Your mural could be considered as election advertising. If your group is planning a mural during an election period, be sure to familiarize yourself with [Canada's Election Act](#). If you are spending over \$500 on materials, please be aware of the [Election Law rules](#) and that your messaging may be considered regulated activity under the law. To avoid this, please keep your messages away from talking about candidates, parties and stick to messaging about climate change, the need for urgent action, solutions and getting out the vote.

If you are a Greenpeace volunteer communicating through an official Greenpeace channel or representing Greenpeace in any way, please also be sure to respect our [core values](#). Greenpeace is an independent, non-partisan organization and does not support or oppose any party, candidate or platform.



**In order to unite our murals across Canada, we would like to see a web of interconnected murals with common characteristics.**

These are a few guiding design parameters we suggest for your murals:

- 1. Text:** Use the text “Act on Climate, We Rise Together” in your mural.
- 2. Imagery:** What does climate action look like in your community?
- 3. Colours:** Use bright colours and include, green, blue and yellow in your choices.

NEW DEAL VERT

MERGE

NOY GNL QC

STOP THE TAR SANDS

ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE!

RISE Together

the future is femme

## Design Tips if you decide to come up with your own mural:

- ✓ **Keep it simple. Your message and imagery should be strong and concise.** Aim to complete the chalk layout as quickly as possible and complete the painting in 1 to 1 1/2 hours with volunteers.
- ✓ **Keep it local.** Invite artists and diverse community members who are representational of the local struggles and movement working together for change to be part of the design committee.
- ✓ **Create space in your mural for a free-range element.** Allowing participants to bring their own self, or creativity to the painting process can be empowering and help to showcase the diversity of our movement. Is there a spot on your mural for children, or participants to paint something personal i.e. a handprint, or words which represent their hopes or solutions.
- ✓ **Be mindful of cultural appropriation** in choosing your designs. [Learn more here](#) and [here](#).
- ✓ **Follow Indigenous arts protocols** if working with Indigenous artists. [Learn more here](#).
- ✓ **Pay for the design!** Don't expect artists to donate their work. Always offer a payment or exchange for their time and work.
- ✓ **Avoid art contests and call for submissions**, unless you plan to compensate folks for their submissions.



**DON'T DO IT ALONE:**  
**INVITE FOLKS TO JOIN YOU**

Whether you are new to organizing or a long-time organizer, it's always good for our movement to make your action participatory by including others. Invite people to help join your organizing team, or to show up and help to paint it. Depending on the size of your mural and your level of ambition, how many people you need will vary. Whether it's a small group or a large community project, what remains constant is the objective of these actions and our collective impact. **Painting murals as an activity during rallies and marches for example, is a great way to get people working together.**

- ✓ **Options options!** Provide a variety of choices for people to pick from for how they can plug in to what's happening and help out.
- ✓ **Brings folk in early:** Planning meetings, action briefings, volunteer orientations & trainings and art builds are different ways to bring people together in advance and to build up your organizing team.
- ✓ **Make it personal:** Most people join a group or get involved because someone they know personally invited them. Make time to reach out directly. 1-1 meetups are awesome.
- ✓ **Spread the word:** Show up at the events and meetings of people outside your regular social circle. This is a great chance to promote your action with likemind people and groups, and to meet other change makers and start collaborating with them.
- ✓ **Friends and families rule!** The quickest way of course to build up support for your action is to ask your friends or family. Those people are the most likely to say yes to you.
- ✓ **Go public.** Consider creating a public event on FB, Eventbrite, [Greenwire](#) or other platforms where you can invite the public to participate in your mural for change!



# THE LOCATION

*Wings of Paradise Mural in Jakarta: People pass by a mural depicting a Bird of Paradise on a wall in Manggarai, South Jakarta. The mural was painted by street artist Riyan "Popo" Riyadi, collaborating with Greenpeace in the #WingsOfParadise global movement to support protection for Papuan rainforest.*

Public squares, sidewalks, driveways, parking lots, garage doors, schools, community centre, bridges, and walls: wherever you can get permission to do a collective mural! **Reach out to your networks and see where the possibilities present themselves.**

## Consider the following questions when selecting your location:

- Is it temporary or permanent?
- Is it close to a significant or iconic location?
- Is it in a public place where many people will see it?
- Will it be seen by your target audience?
- Is it close to public transit, washrooms, a water source?
- Can you get a good photo?
- Is it safe?

## Tips On Choosing A Location:

- ✓ Get permission to do your mural. Whether it is the owner of a building or the organizers of a protest, getting approval for this project can help make things easier.
- ✓ If you are planning for a temporary mural, select a location where the mural can fade naturally by the elements, so you can avoid the time-consuming step of having to wash your mural off a surface.



*Community wall mural - Wings of Paradise in Kuala Lumpur - After days of working under the heat of the sun and pelting rain, Malaysian artist Lee Hui Ling and students revealed a new mural for forest protection. Photo courtesy of © [Nandakumar S. Haridas / Greenpeace](#)*

- ✓ Be aware of local by-laws. Public street art may carry legal risks or consequences if you do not follow local municipal guidelines. Be sure to be informed of any restrictions/requirements before selecting your location. If choosing to paint on public space, use water soluble, easy to remove, non-toxic materials to help limit your risks.
- ✓ Avoid trespassing.
- ✓ Always consider safety of participants and exit/go around routes for vehicles.

- ✓ Be sure there is enough room for people to paint comfortably and safely.
- ✓ If you plan to design your own mural with a local artist, you may want to do the designing after your location is selected. The location might influence the shape and aesthetic of the mural design.
- ✓ If your a mural is planned for a ground surface like a sidewalk, street, or public square, be sure you can get a great shot from above.
- ✓ If you are planning to do your mural at a specific event like a rally, march, or festival, be sure to consult with the organizers to get permission and integrate your plans better well in advance.

# THE PAINT

Use paints that don't contain any environmentally-unfriendly oils, acrylics or volatile organic compounds (VOCS).

For temporary murals, your paints must be non-toxic and water soluble, so that it will easily fade with the weather.

**Clay paint** is all natural and ideal because you can make it yourself for a low cost, has minimal odour, provides nice coverage, a natural matt finish and doesn't take long to dry. You can simply buy dry clay at your local pottery supply store, and mix it with water (using a drill with a [paint mixing tool](#)) to create earth friendly colours as well.

**Tempera paint** is fun and colourful, easy to find, easy to wash, and non-toxic.

**For permanent murals, getting good quality outdoor eco-paint will require some research. Start your research early.**

## How much paint should you buy?

Here is an example of a street mural sketch:



For a 35 foot across mural, it is estimated to take about 3 gallons of paint to cover the entire area. Think about what percentage of which colours you will need. Make your paint shopping list in %.

**Here is an estimate of what percent of which colours will be needed:**

- 25% green
- 20% black
- 15% yellow
- 15% white
- 10% blue
- 10% purple
- 5% orange



### Tips on Painting Your Mural:

- ✓ **Create a sketch or digital design of your mural and make multiple coloured copies.** Make enough coloured copies so everyone painting it out can have one. Put copies on clipboards or tape them to a piece of cardboard so they don't blow away or get damaged by paint.



- ✓ **Preparing the mural:** No matter what technique you are using, have a group of people **who can commit to drawing the mural first with chalk**, and organizing all the materials in advance is essential. Everyone else can join in and paint the mural after and can be directed as needed.

- ✓ **Trace with a projector:** If you are planning to put your mural on a wall you can trace the image using a projector. This is a quick, practical and simple method of getting your image copied to a paintable surface. Be sure to choose a location close to a power source. Project your image on the wall and trace it with chalk first on the wall. This will have to happen in the evening, when it's not too light out. Painting may have to happen the next day in the daylight if you don't have a good light source to paint easily after tracing. If you don't have access to a digital projector, you can use an overhead projector and a printed transparency of your design, or even [make your own DIY projector](#).
- ✓ **Use the grid method:** For simple designs, dividing your image into a grid on a paper copy can help to replicate it onto the ground or wall. This is the easiest method that can be done free hand. This can be done with both circle or square designs. Circles can be divided into pie shapes, and square designs into a typical grid. Chalking a replica of the entire grid on your paint surface will allow you to carefully copy each section of the image to its corresponding spot on the grid to sketch out the whole design in an effective way. Try to avoid making your squares too small as this will result in time loss during preparation. This method is highly precise and will ensure that you are working to the exact replica of your template. Essentially you will



*Urban Art Festival for the Arctic that took place in Barcelona, with more than 35 artists painting around 600 meters of walls, (1.500 square meters). The artists, from 8 different countries, painted their interpretation of the Arctic, asking for its protection.*

be completing a large puzzle in a step by step process. This takes more time than tracing with a projector, although it can be done entirely during daylight hours and doesn't need any tech or power. Remember - the grid system can be fast and easy with simple designs.

- ✓ **Use the stencil method:** Another method is tracing and then cutting shapes/silhouettes out of paper/ cardboard the size you want for your mural and then tracing them with chalk onto your surface. Stenciling

remains a very popular method for mural painting if you are using graphics that are more complicated that can't easily be drawn quickly by free hand. The advantage of this method is having the possibility to prepare most of your mural off-site. This is ideal if you have limited onsite time to complete your mural in which case stencils will speed up your process dramatically. Use strong, durable paper to make your stencil silhouettes. Large stencils may need to be carefully folded in order to transport. Some people like to use [Red Rosin floor paper](#) to make larger stencils!

- ✓ **Practice:** Even if your mural is a small sidewalk project, it's amazingly helpful to actually practice laying it out, getting paint ready, working with your team and painting.
- ✓ **Contrast colours:** Light dark contrast makes images and words pop and be more visible. Keep this in mind when selecting paint colours.
- ✓ **Limit your colours:** For ease of painting and cleanup, limiting your murals to between 2-4 colours is best for beginner muralists, however don't let this discourage you. If you want to be more colorful and ambitious—go for it!

- ✓ **Water down your paint** for a nice flow on your surface. Paint should spread over the concrete quick and effortlessly, yet not be drippy.
- ✓ **Don't mix paints on site**, have all your mixing done in advance and store/transport it small buckets with lids.
- ✓ **Check the weather.** Choose your painting dates when the weather is clear!
- ✓ **Assess risks and inform participants.** Be sure to clearly inform everyone participating on any risks involved in painting. This may need to be done "on the spot" if people are joining in to paint spontaneously.



# SUPPLIES

- Non toxic paint! Make your own natural **clay paint**, or use good quality water-soluble **Tempera paint** for temporary murals.
- Many low cost reusable paint brushes or chip paint brushes with wooden handles (think about how many people will be painting at once and buy enough brushes to accommodate), Purchase a variety of sizes - 1/2/3/4 inches.
- 3 or 5 gallon buckets with lids for pre mixing paint in advance with water.
- 3 or 5 gallon bucket for cleaning brushes.
- Small reusable containers to divide up paint between people like yogurt containers or wide cups is best. Make sure the opening is wide enough for your brushes to fit.
- Water for thinning paint.
- Fabric, reusable drop cloths, and smaller cloths/rags for protecting the ground and wiping hands and spills etc.
- Fold up tables/wagons/carts to easily move and place your supplies.
- Ladders (for projector tracing, for painting on high places, for photo taking etc). Remember, safety first! Always have a spotter holding the ladder for safety.

- Projector and extension cords (if tracing) - these are easy to borrow if you ask around.
- Pack of sidewalk chalk for initial drawing.
- Long bamboo stick (4-5 feet long by 1 inch wide) to make **DIY chalk holders**, so you can stand while chalking.
- Heavy string (100 feet).
- Paper/bristol board/**heavy rosin paper** (if making stencils).
- Clipboards or cardboard and tape to protect layout designs while working outside.
- Cardboard or foam for people to use for protecting their knees while painting.
- Waste-free snacks and drinking water for your team.
- Hats, comfy shoes, and sunscreen.
- A way to easily identify the coordinating team like Greenpeace t-shirts or bandanas.
- Portable speakers and music if you don't have song leaders.
- Megaphone if planning to address large crowds.
- Traffic/safety vests if planning to reroute traffic.
- Broom(s) for sweeping the concrete before painting.



# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Planning Team:** Responsible for the coordination of the entire project including outreach, promotion, budgeting, etc.
- 2. Prep/Set-up:** This group will layout the design on the mural surface, chalking out lines for others to fill in and possibly dabbing each part with the correct color as a guide. They will set up and organize materials for everyone else to participate in painting.
- 3. Paint facilitators/bartenders:** These facilitators will manage the paint station and invite people to paint the mural, show them what to do, and make sure painters have what they need.
- 4. Police/public liaison:** These folks will communicate with police or others about what is happening, making sure to keep it peaceful and keep the mural space safe. De-escalation skills is an asset for these folks.
- 5. Document/Digital/Comms:** People to document via photos and videos, both to share immediately on social media and to help amplify your story after. They could also consider live streaming or making stop motions. Before the event these folks can contact media directly to inform them of your project. **IMPORTANT : Be sure to take a group photo at the end!** [Read more on how to get media at your grassroots action here.](#)
- 6. Clean up crew:** Have a committed team set-up in advance to ensure this important job is done well.

7. **Street safety (if needed):** This team will make sure the mural area is safely blocked off from vehicles or other disruptions so the muralists can safely focus and paint.
8. **Storytellers (optional):** These folks will tell the story of the mural—and the community, movement, or group—to the public. These can also be your mural team’s media spokespeople and FBlive hosts.
9. **Song leaders/Music (optional):** Does your group or community have song leaders that can lead and sing while the mural is happening? Check out this [Rise for Climate Songbook](#) to learn some great chants. No singers? Maybe you have a DJ and you can bring a self-powered portable speaker. Here’s a [“Songs of Revolution” playlist](#).
10. **Bloggers/Vloggers (optional):** People to share their personal experience to help keep the mural story going after it’s been painting.



# CLEAN UP

Keep track of your supplies, wipe up any spills. Be responsible for removing and properly cleaning for reuse and/or disposing supplies when you have finished. Expect things to get messy and be prepared with a team to manage this. **Leave no trace!** (except for your mural of course)

# SHARE! WE REALLY WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU DID!

Be sure to share your masterpiece with us! We're asking everyone to send in their experiences to help create a shared, growing story. Share your photos, videos, stories, stop motions, time lapses, blogs and vlogs via Twitter, Facebook or Instagram.

## Use Hashtags:



**#GreenNewDeal**

**#GreenNewDealCanada**

**#ActionsNotWords**

**#ActOnClimate**

**#Artivism**

**#WeWillPaintTheFuture**

**Don't forget to tag us [@GreenpeaceCA](#) and [@GPCvolunteers](#).**

Another great way to share your story is on [Greenwire](#), an online organizing tool for Greenpeace volunteers which will help you connect to other activists.

# RESOURCES AND INSPIRATION

**[Greenpeace Street Mural Training:  
Timelapse](#)**

**[We Will Paint The Future: Rise for  
Climate Justice Mural Project](#)**

**[Divest Mural at Wells Fargo](#)**

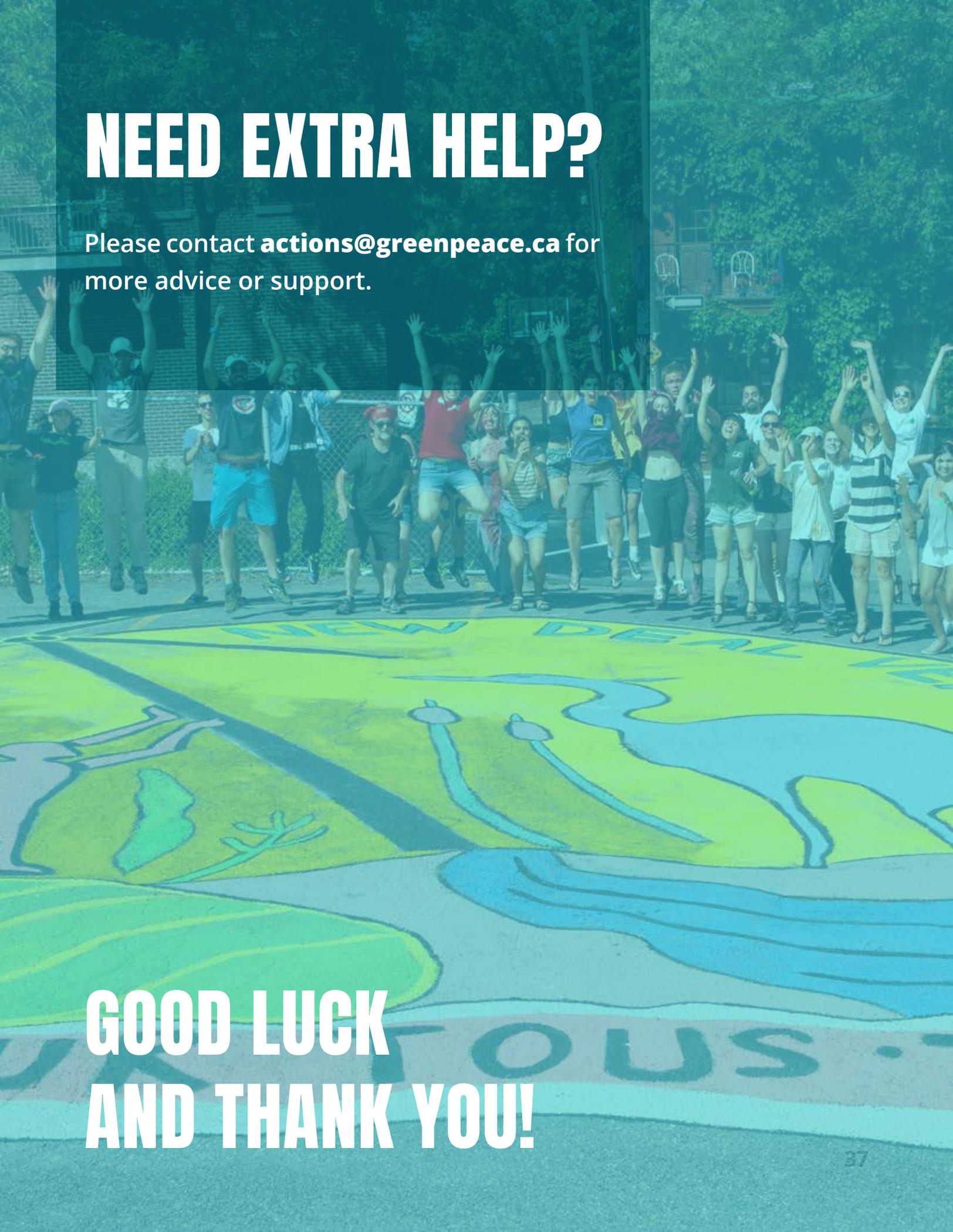


**Thank you to David Solnit  
for all his support and tips!**

Greenpeace's push for a Green New Deal is not affiliated with any political party or platform. Want to know more of what we think should be in a Green New Deal for Canada. Click [here](#) or [here](#).

# NEED EXTRA HELP?

Please contact [actions@greenpeace.ca](mailto:actions@greenpeace.ca) for more advice or support.



GOOD LUCK  
AND THANK YOU!