GLOBAL ARTIVISM MONTH RECIPE BOOKS

ACCESS & PARTICIPATION



GLOBAL ARTIVISM MONTH

EMBRACING CULTURAL ACTIVISM FOR A SAFE AND JUST WORLD

WELCOME

Every recipe assumes a kitchen. It assumes a stove that works, ingredients you can find nearby, hands that can hold a knife, and a language you can read the instructions in. The assumption goes unnoticed until someone stands in front of the recipe and cannot use it.

Access is the part of the recipe that says the assumption out loud.
This is the third of six Global Artivism Month recipe books. It is about who can actually reach your activity: get to it, get into it, understand it, take part in it, and be counted in it. Like every recipe in this series, nothing here is a rule. It is written to be adapted, substituted and passed on.



WHY THIS MATTERS TO THIS MOVEMENT IN PARTICULAR

Global Artivism is a Global South and Global Majority-led movement. Artivism claims to amplify voices that dominant narratives leave out, and to work with communities rather than only about them. A locked door, an untranslated invitation or a venue an hour from the nearest bus decides who the work is for, and who is left standing outside it. Access is not the polite finish on the work. It is the justice the work is asking for, practiced at the door.



WHAT THIS RECIPE BOOK IS NOT

It is not a compliance checklist. Where legal accessibility standards exist, they differ by country, and several of the most widely circulated ones were written in wealthy states and carry those assumptions about buildings, budgets and bodies. Meeting a standard is not the same as someone being able to take part. This book is written the other way around: start from the person who cannot get in, and work backward.

ACCESS WITHOUT A BUDGET

Every recipe here comes in three portions: what costs nothing, what costs a little, and what to do when you have real resources. The zero-cost portion is not a consolation prize. Some of the most consequential access practices — asking in advance, publishing the truth about your venue, letting people leave without explanation — cost nothing at all.

THE BASICS

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ACCESS?

Everything that stands between a person and your activity: distance, money, stairs, time, language, noise, fear, a form they cannot fill in, a platform they cannot open, a photograph they cannot risk being in.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION?

Access gets someone into the room. Participation gives them a share of what happens there. You can run a fully accessible event where a group is present and still voiceless. Access is the condition; participation is the point.

FOUR QUESTIONS TO HOLD

- Can I get there? Distance, transport, cost, timing, safety on the way.
- Can I get in? The door, the price, the identification check, the stairs, the registration form.
- Can I take it in? Language, sound, light, pace, format, jargon.
- Can I shape it? Was this built around one imagined body, pace and language, or can it take the shape of mine? Can what I need change how it runs?

WHO DECIDES WHAT ACCESS IS NEEDED?

The people who need it. The disability rights principle nothing about us without us applies here without dilution: if your access plan was designed entirely by people who have never been kept out, it is a guess.

Pay a disabled person, a Deaf person, a neurodivergent person, a community interpreter to tell you what you got wrong — before the event, not after.

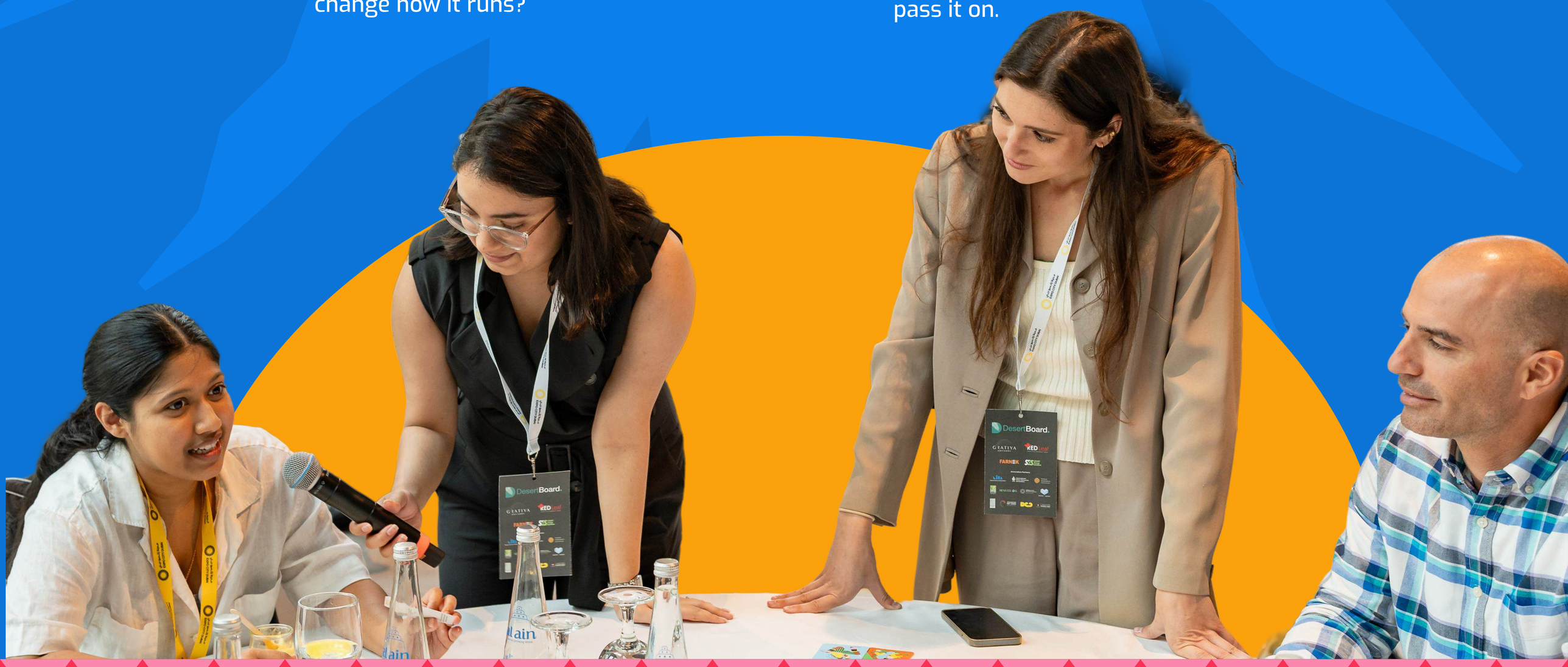
DOES MY ACTIVITY HAVE TO BE PERFECT?

No, and it will not be. Access is a practice, not a state you arrive at. What is not acceptable is silence: letting people discover the barrier at the door.

Publish what you have and what you do not have, honestly, in advance. A host who writes there are three steps at the entrance with no ramp, is doing better access work than a host who writes nothing.

ONE THING, THEN ANOTHER

Do not try to do everything in November 2026. Choose the barriers that most affect the people you most want in the room, fix those, write down what you learned, and pass it on.



MONEY, TIME AND MATERIAL ACCESS

TICKETING AND ENTRY

- **Free if possible.** If your activity can be free, make it free and say so in the first line, not the fine print.
- **Free allocations that do not humiliate.** If you must charge, hold a share of places free and release them with no proof of income, no form and no conversation. Anything that asks a person to demonstrate financial limitations in public is a barrier.
- **Pay what you can,** with a real floor of zero and the lowest number listed first.
- **Do not oversell scarcity.** Registration lists that fill in ten minutes are selected for people with fast internet and free time.

GETTING THERE

- Choose the venue by transit line before you choose it by beauty. Ask: which bus, how late does it run, how far is the walk, is the walk safe after dark.
- **Transport support:** if possible, consider one or more: fares reimbursed in cash at the door, prepaid transit cards, a shared van, a meeting point with a group walk, or simply covering the fare for the people traveling farthest.
- **Timing:** an event that ends after the last bus is an event for people with cars or money for a taxi.

TIME AS A RESOURCE

- Working hours exclude workers. Weekday mornings exclude almost everyone with a job.
- **Care:** when possible, offer childcare on site, a corner with mats and paper and one paid person, or explicit children are welcome, come as you are — which costs nothing and changes who arrives.
- Long programs exclude people with caring duties, chronic illness and shift work. Publish a clear start and end, and mean it.
- **Punctuality is access, in both directions.** People arrange their day around the times you publish, so begin and end when you said you would. Say in advance whether someone can come in after the start, and make it possible to leave in the middle without explaining: a seat near the door, and no comment when it is used.

FOOD AND MATERIALS

- Food at cultural events is access, not hospitality. A meal changes who can stay three hours.
- If your activity requires materials, provide them. Do not build an activity that assumes people own paint, a smartphone, a printer or good shoes.

PAYING THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE IT

- Extraction is an access failure. If your activity centers a community, budget to pay the artists, elders, interpreters and organizers from that community. Unpaid labor is affordable only to people who already have money. This is not an argument against solidarity economies, mutual aid or freely chosen volunteering.
- The difference is consent and reciprocity: work people agree to, on terms they helped set, with whatever value there is shared among them, is not the same as work an organizer takes for free because it was easier than budgeting for it. If your activity runs on exchange rather than fees, say so openly before people commit, agree what each person gets from it, and check that the ones with least are not the ones giving most.

DATA AND DEVICES

- Video costs data. Offer an audio-only stream, a downloadable file, and a summary that reads as text.
- Design for the phone people actually have, not the most expensive model.
- Where possible, publish in formats that survive offline: a one-page image, a printable sheet, a voice note.

BODIES, SPACES AND SENSES

AUDIT YOUR VENUE HONESTLY, IN ONE WALK

Walk the route a stranger takes, from the transit stop to the seat, and write down what you find: entrance steps, door widths, the surface underfoot, the slope, the lighting, the distance from drop-off to door, the restrooms, whether there is anywhere to sit, whether there is water, whether there is anywhere quiet. Check what your own city or country requires as well. Where local accessibility regulations exist, they usually carry measurements and technical references on door widths, ramp gradients, signage and restrooms, which give your walk something concrete to measure against and are often free to consult. Use them as a tool for seeing the building, not as the definition of access: meeting them is a floor, and not every barrier that matters to your participants appears in them.

Publish it, including the failures. An access description that lists barriers lets people decide for themselves. An access description that only lists features asks them to gamble.

SEATING

The cheapest access intervention in cultural life is a chair. Standing-only events exclude people with chronic pain, fatigue, pregnancy, older bodies and anyone who cannot stand for two hours. Put chairs at the edges of every standing event.

REST AND RECOVERY

A quiet room, a bench, water, and a way to leave the room without crossing the stage. Long programs need breaks long enough to reach a restroom and return.

OUTDOORS AND IN THE STREET

Heat, distance, duration, ground surface, restrooms and shade decide who can march. Publish the route length, the pace, the surface, and where someone can step out. Offer a shorter parallel route or a stationary point for people who cannot walk the full distance.

BLIND AND LOW VISION PARTICIPANTS

- **Describe out loud.** Say who you are and what the room looks like when you open. Describe images from the stage. This costs nothing and is the single most useful habit for visual art events.
- Audio description for performance and film where you can fund it.
- **Touch tours** where the artist agrees.
- Large print, high contrast, and text that also exists as text — never only as an image of text.

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PARTICIPANTS

- **Sign languages are not universal.** They are national and regional, with their own grammars, and a country may have several. Book the language your community actually uses, and ask Deaf people, not hearing intermediaries, who to book.
- **Interpreters need lighting,** a clear sightline, materials in advance and rotation on long programs.
- **Captions** — live or on recorded material — serve Deaf and hard of hearing people, and also anyone in a noisy street, on a weak connection, or working in a second language.
- **Zero-cost versions**: printed scripts, written summaries, a text thread running alongside a spoken event, speaking one at a time and facing the room.



NEURODIVERGENCE AND SENSORY ACCESS

NEURODIVERGENCE COVERS A WIDE RANGE OF WAYS OF PROCESSING THE WORLD, INCLUDING AUTISTIC PEOPLE, PEOPLE WITH ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER, DYSLEXIC PEOPLE, PEOPLE WITH SENSORY PROCESSING DIFFERENCES, PEOPLE WITH TOURETTE SYNDROME, AND PEOPLE WHOSE SENSITIVITY TO LIGHT OR SOUND HAS MEDICAL CONSEQUENCES, AMONG OTHERS.

IT IS NOT ONE NEED, AND THE PRACTICES BELOW HELP VERY DIFFERENT PEOPLE FOR DIFFERENT REASONS.

PREDICTABILITY IS ACCESS

Uncertainty is a barrier as real as a staircase. Publish, in advance:

- What the space looks like and sounds like. Photographs of the entrance and the room help more than any description.
- Whether there is a line, a bag check, an identification check, a crowd.
- The order of events and the actual timings, including how long people are expected to sit.
- Whether anyone will be asked to speak, perform, touch, hold hands or move in a group. Surprise participation is the most common exclusion in participatory art.

PERMISSION, STATED OUT LOUD

Say at the start, in the invitation and again in the room: you can move, stand, rock, fidget, wear headphones, step out and come back, leave without explaining, and take part without speaking. Nobody will be called on. Nobody has to say their name.

FORMAT

Participatory, immersive and improvised formats carry real barriers. That does not mean abandoning them; it means offering a second route into the same work: a recording, a written version, a small-group session, a time slot with fewer people in the room.

SENSORY DESIGN

- Warn in advance about strobe or flashing light, sudden loud sound, smoke, haze, strong scent and total darkness. Flashing imagery can trigger seizures; make sure there is a clear disclaimer in case it's being used.
- Offer a low-stimulus option: a quiet room, a quiet hour before doors open, a seat near the exit, or a version of the piece experienced without the crowd.
- Provide ear defenders or earplugs if you can. Say that people are welcome to bring their own.

LANGUAGE AND INSTRUCTIONS

Say what you mean literally. We start at 7 and finish at 9 is accessible; we will kick off around 7-ish and see where it takes us is not. Write instructions in short steps, in the order they happen. Avoid movement jargon or define it the first time you use it.

LANGUAGE JUSTICE

LANGUAGE JUSTICE ASKS A SIMPLE QUESTION: WHO HAS TO CHANGE LANGUAGE IN ORDER TO BE HEARD, AND WHO NEVER HAS TO?

IN MOST INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL SPACES THE ANSWER RUNS THE SAME DIRECTION. THIS MONTH IS BUILT TO RUN THE OTHER WAY.



THE PRINCIPLE

The language of your community is the language of your activity. Global Artivism Month is multilingual by nature; nothing here asks you to work in English. Where translation happens, it should travel outward from the community language, not inward toward a dominant one.

PRACTICES

- **Interpretation, not only translation.** Written translation serves documents; live interpretation serves people. Whispered interpretation for one or two people costs nothing but a volunteer and a seat.
- **Pay interpreters.** Community and signed-language interpretation is skilled labor, and asking a bilingual participant to interpret for free removes them from the event they came to attend.
- **Two languages done well beats five done badly.** Choose the languages actually spoken by the people you want in the room, including minoritized, migrant, Indigenous and signed languages.
- **Do not require literacy.** Voice notes, radio, recorded invitations, images and word of mouth reach people that a written flyer never will.
- **Plain language in every language. I**nstitutional register is its own barrier.
- **Machine translation is usable for a first draft and for informal exchange.** It is not safe for consent forms, safety instructions, legal text, or anything where being misunderstood carries a cost. Have a human check anything that matters.
- **Credit and pay translators the way you credit artists.**

DIGITAL ACCESS AND ONLINE PARTICIPATION



ONLINE PARTICIPATION IS NOT AUTOMATICALLY ACCESSIBLE. IT MOVES THE BARRIERS RATHER THAN REMOVING THEM.

PUBLISHING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- **Alt text** on every image, describing what matters in it rather than naming the file.
- **Captions** on every video, and a transcript where you can.
- **Never put essential information only inside an image.** A poster with the date only in the artwork is unreadable to a screen reader and to anyone on a slow connection.
- **Contrast and type size.** Elegant low-contrast design excludes low-vision readers.
- **Hashtags in camel case — #GlobalArtivismMonth** — so screen readers pronounce the words.
- **Content warnings** for violent, distressing or flashing material.

LOW BANDWIDTH BY DESIGN

An audio-only option. A phone dial-in where it exists. Materials downloadable in advance. A written summary published afterward, so the event survives a connection that dropped.

PLATFORMS AND STANDARDS

- The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (W3C) are a useful reference point for anything published on a website.
- Ask what a platform requires before choosing it: an account, a phone number, a real name, a data plan, a device from the last five years. Ask whether it is blocked, throttled or surveilled where your participants live.

HYBRID, DONE HONESTLY

A hybrid event where online participants can only watch is a broadcast with witnesses. If people online are meant to take part, give them a way to speak, a person in the room whose job is to bring them in, and a microphone discipline that makes the room audible.

WHO IS NOT IN THE ROOM

ACCESS IS USUALLY TAUGHT AS DISABILITY ACCESS. IT IS WIDER THAN THAT, AND IN THIS MOVEMENT SEVERAL OF THE WIDEST BARRIERS ARE POLITICAL.

SAFETY AS ACCESS

Some people cannot be photographed: undocumented participants, people under surveillance, people whose families do not know something about them, people organizing where visibility carries legal risk.

- Offer a clear, visible way to opt out of images: a sticker, a lanyard, a marked zone that cameras do not enter.
- Ask consent for photography and film before, not after, and separately for publishing.
- Let people take part without appearing in the archive, without giving a legal name and without joining a list.
- Think about the registration list itself: what you collect, where it is stored, and who could demand it.

DOCUMENTS AND POLICING

Venues that check identification, or that sit next to a police station, exclude undocumented and criminalized people before the door. So do events with a visible security presence.

PEOPLE WHO CANNOT COME TO YOU

Prisons, hospitals, care homes, refugee camps, occupied and blockaded territories, rural distance. Where you cannot bring people to the activity, consider bringing the activity to them: a satellite session, a printed edition, a radio slot, a recorded piece carried by someone who already has access.

AGE AT BOTH ENDS

Children need a reason to be welcome and something to do. Older participants need seating, volume, light and an end time.

GENDER, SEXUALITY AND RELIGION

Ask whether your venue is safe to walk into visibly LGBTQIA+, visibly religious, visibly foreign. Consider prayer time, dietary needs, single-gender spaces where they are what makes attendance possible, and the day of the week you chose.

THE QUESTION TO CLOSE ON

LOOK AT WHO CAME. ASK WHO IS MISSING. THEN ASK WHETHER YOU KNOW WHY, OR WHETHER YOU ARE GUESSING —AND GO ASK THEM.

THE ACCESS PLAN

THREE PORTIONS OF THE SAME RECIPE

	NO BUDGET	SMALL BUDGET	REAL BUDGET
GETTING THERE	Venue on a transit line; end before the last bus	Fares reimbursed in cash at the door	Shared transport; accessible vehicle
COST	Free entry, said in the first line	Free allocation, no proof asked	Paid participants and paid community artists
PHYSICAL	Honest access description; chairs at the edges	Ramp rental; a paid person on the door	Venue chosen and adapted for access
DEAF ACCESS	Speak one at a time; written summaries	Note-taker; live text thread	Paid sign language interpreters, rotating
BLIND ACCESS	Describe the room and the images aloud	Large print and high-contrast handouts	Audio description; touch tour
NEURODIVERGENCE	Publish what to expect; permission to leave	Quiet corner; ear defenders	Quiet room; low-stimulus session
LANGUAGE	Activity in the community's language	Whispered interpretation by a paid speaker	Simultaneous interpretation; translated materials
DIGITAL	Alt text, captions, camel case hashtags	Transcripts; audio-only option	Live captioning; low-bandwidth stream
CARE	Children welcome, stated out loud	A corner with mats and materials	Paid childcare on site

WRITE AN ACCESS STATEMENT

Four short paragraphs, published wherever people find your event: how to get there and what it costs; what the building is like, including its barriers; what is provided (language, captions, quiet space, seating); and one named contact, reachable in writing, with a date by which requests can still be met.

BUDGET IT, AND NAME SOMEONE

Decide the access line before the program line, not from what is left over: a line set last is a line that gets cut. And access fails when it belongs to everyone — one named access contact, before and during the activity, is worth more than a long plan owned by nobody.

ASK, DO NOT GUESS

One line on your registration form: Is there anything we should know, or anything we could do, so that you can take part? Then answer everyone who writes, even when the answer is no.

AFTERWARD

Ask three participants what worked and what did not. Write one page. Send it to the next host. That page is the starter you pass on.

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

DOES GLOBAL ARTIVISM MONTH PAY FOR ACCESS?

No. The movement does not fund activities. The fundraising recipe book, the second in this series, covers how to raise what your activity needs — and access is a strong case to make to a funder, because it is concrete, costable and easy to describe.

WHAT IF I CAN AFFORD NOTHING AT ALL?

Then do the free things, and do them well: publish honest access information, ask people what they need, provide seating, describe aloud, speak plainly, welcome children, allow people to arrive late and leave early, and hold your activity in the language your community speaks.

MY ONLY POSSIBLE VENUE IS INACCESSIBLE. SHOULD I CANCEL?

Not necessarily. Say so publicly and specifically, offer whatever parallel route you can — a recording, a street-level satellite session, a visit — and put the venue on your list of things to change before the next edition. What is not acceptable is announcing an event as open when you know it is not.

WHAT IF I GET IT WRONG?

You will. Apologize plainly to the person affected, fix what can be fixed that day, and write down the fix. Defensiveness costs more than the original failure.

DO I HAVE TO DO EVERYTHING IN THIS BOOK?

No. Choose what most affects the people you most want with you, and add one thing you did not do last time.

CLOSING NOTE

Access work is rarely visible in the documentation. It does not photograph. It shows up as the person who was in the room, in a picture where you cannot tell that they almost were not. That is the whole point: a month that claims the world should be able to hold the world. Cook for the table you actually have, and set more places than you think you need.