

Leave your
mark
at The
Mill

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(Overview)

This handbook outlines the Gabriel Caruana Foundation's volunteer programme. It describes the programme ('3. Leave Your Mark at The Mill') and its values through how it was built ('1. How it came to be' and '2. Seek and you shall find') and provides information for prospective volunteers of the Gabriel Caruana Foundation (5 and 6).

The application of the volunteer programme intends to improve artists' and participants' opportunities of gaining experience in running an artist-run space, develop skills, reinforce the spirit of collaboration and ensure strengthening of networks. As such, active participation, improved ownership and being part of a community will directly benefit the Foundation's sustainability moving forward.

(Section 1)

How it came to be

During the Gabriel Caruana Foundation's (GCF) Community Engagement Officer's first months at the role, a placement opportunity through relations with the University of Malta came about. Together with IMAESC (International Master in Adult Education for Social Change) placement students, a volunteer programme which was felt to best suit the needs of The Mill and, through consultation, those of volunteers was compiled.



Thus, the foundations of the volunteer programme were an exercise in applying the placement students' evolving background in Adult Education, acknowledging The Mill and the Gabriel Caruana Foundation's changing necessities and creating a learning opportunity of creating the programme through its gradual application in practice.

The requirements of International volunteer exchange programmes such as the European Solidarity Corps, a sensitivity to the local climate of volunteering and understanding how collaboration through volunteering opportunities encourages local and foreign relations were also helpful in giving direction to the programme.

(Section 2)

Seek and you shall find (informing the programme)

Based

on first conversations with placement students and a run-through of their placement brief, the theme of circularity was highlighted. Together, we explored our experience of the process of circular learning as to how it could inform our next steps, and the volunteer programme itself. We collaborated online using the MIRO platform and in-person with a variety of more interactive methods.

2.1 Circularity in the programme's development

Below is a summary of the milestones reached with the IMAESC placement students which in fact turned out to be a solid basis for the framework of future volunteer or placement experiences.



EXCHANGE - Sharing our background, learnings and applying our prior-knowledge to the task at hand, up-skilling each other along the way

RESEARCHING specifically the task at hand to fill-in gaps in information

SHARING newly acquired knowledge and research findings

CONSULTING with past-volunteers for knowledge through experience

ANALYSING past volunteer's experiences and needs

STAYING UP-TO-DATE with the GCF's needs

INITIATING action of needs (eventually through volunteer recruitment) and together gaining new experiences

MEASURING development and celebrating achievements



2.2 Informed consultations

The agenda for consultations was formulated together with the IMAESC placement students following research and sharing sessions. Consultations took place with young adults who had previously volunteered with the Foundation, whose volunteer experience was ongoing or who were yet to volunteer with the Foundation. These helped gather data regarding topics including volunteers' expectations based on experience,

the benefits and value of volunteering (generally and with the Foundation), predicting possible scenarios and, with the intention of increasing volunteer retention, how their experience may be improved.

2.3 Things to consider: consultation highlights guiding the volunteer programme

The following pointers were extracted from the series of consultations, informing actions during the process of creating the volunteer programme with placement students, as well as the the resulting programme itself. Developing a programme which is continually informed by the Gabriel Caruana Foundation and the volunteers' needs will be ensured through:

Getting to know each other

...including people's weaknesses and their strengths. Understanding volunteers' wishes such as learning a new skill or doing activities which differ from their professional roles.

Specifying roles

Depending on the task, this may be done before initiating recruitment or once volunteers are recruited. It ensures that volunteers are working towards a result, while ensuring ownership. This action prevents the fear of volunteers not knowing what the experience shall entail. Furthermore, the importance of the whole team knowing what the volunteers' roles entail to avoid overlap and waste of resources.

Volunteer's involvement in improving the volunteer programme and experience

Some examples are the communication with active volunteers on roles as mentioned in '2. Specifying roles' above, activities, improvement of application process, communication of opportunities to make them more reachable.

An encouraging application process

...which motivates volunteering through informing, understanding and making it user-friendly.

Providing a volunteer handbook

this would be best to have available on hand, to show to people who express an interest in volunteering as well as during the orientation process. The handbook should include any policies, useful organisational information (mission, history, goals) and any other logistical/legal information (if required).

Transparency and consensus

Many volunteers appreciated that with the Gabriel Caruana Foundation and activities at The Mill, they could see how an organisation works from the inside out. Opportunities of transparency and honesty should be available for volunteers, having them feel part of an evolving team - a live organism.

Human interaction

The humane and communal aspect was felt to be strong at The Mill. Elements such as the welcoming nature felt, and that The Mill felt like a hub for people to come together was encouraged. Building positive relationships within the experience continues to be an aim for experiences within the Foundation.

Consistent communication

Aspects to be communicated include but are not limited to: information about the Foundation and The Mill when starting off a volunteer experience (a goal of the volunteer pack), progress of reaching volunteer milestones and communicating volunteer opportunities as it was expressed during consultations that many people interested in such an experience do not necessarily know where to go

The right resources

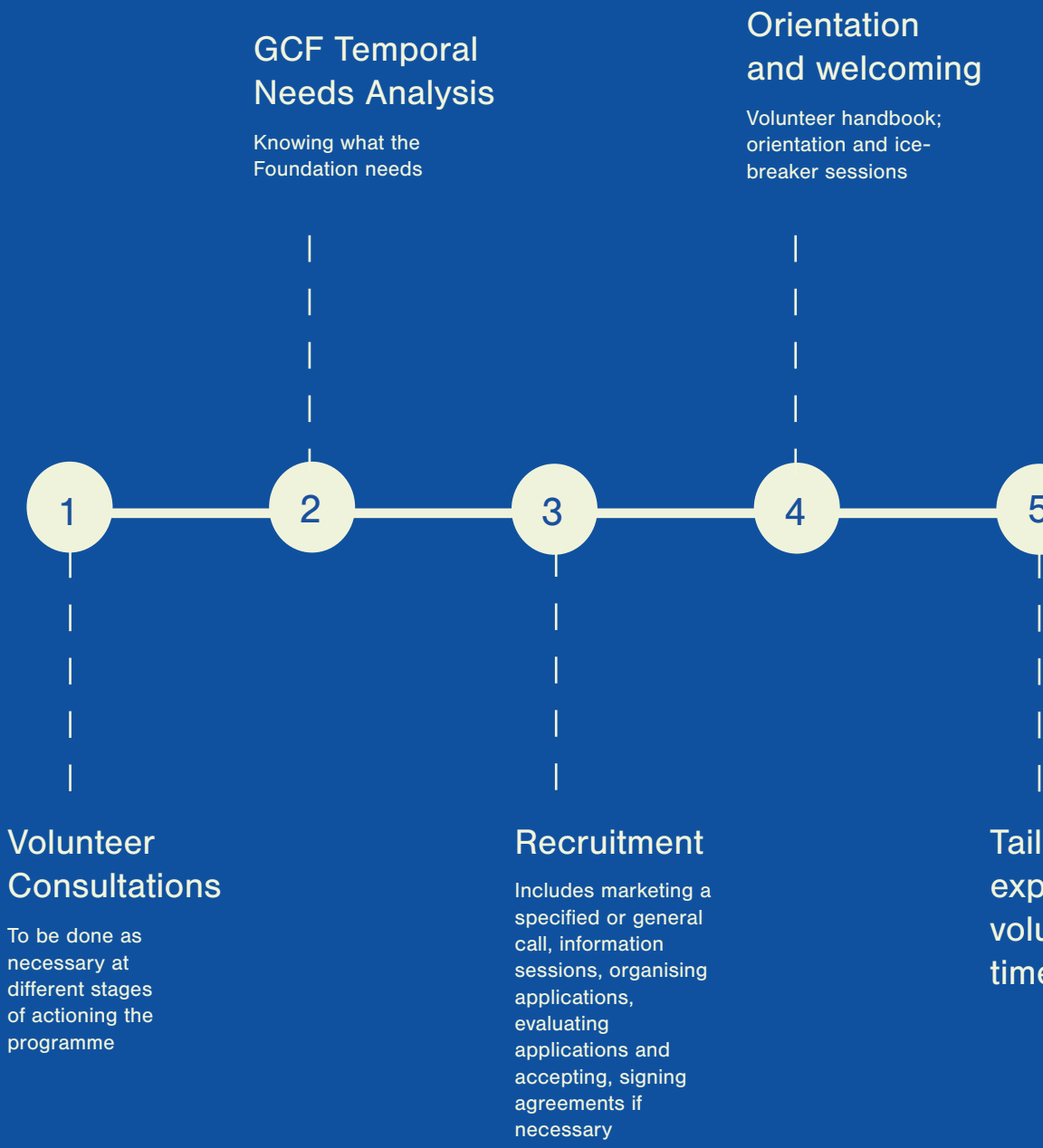
Having the right tools and human resources to ensure as smooth an experience as possible - that "people there are ready to guide, have patience to facilitate and explain processes" (volunteer, 2022)

(Section 3)

Leave Your Mark At The Mill

The following milestones of the volunteer programme are based on the considerations outlined in '2.3 - Things to consider'. Combined, these outline a programme of mutual benefit based on the idea of continued learning, giving and receiving.

Leave Your Mark At The Mill From Recruitment to Celebration



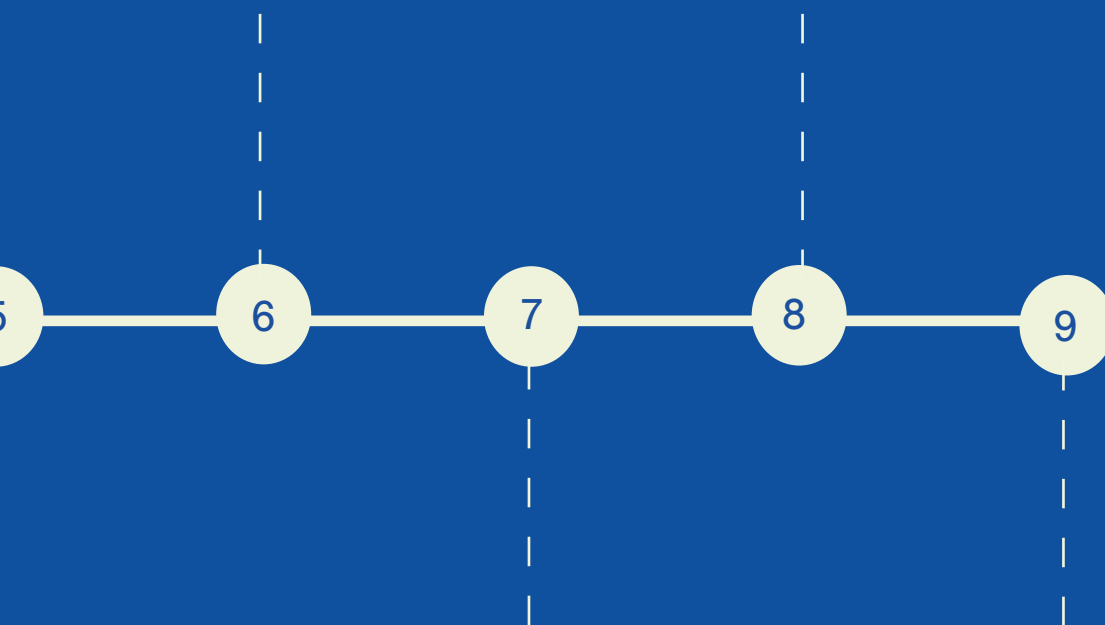
on

Creating milestones and targets

This may be done with GCF management or together with volunteers

Where We're At

Formal or informal feedback sessions; Revising milestones and timelines accordingly + feedback /dissemination



oring
erience to
unteer and
ely needs

Roles, task
dissemination
and revision of
timeline

Celebration
Communication of
achieved outcomes;
Recognition of
accomplishments

Varying (Section 4) Factors To Consider

The volunteer programme leaves rooms for flexibility depending on varying factors including:

- The availability and duration of the experience (long-term or short-term)
- Different opportunities including but not limited to volunteering, work/student placement, internship, international exchange
- Background of volunteers (making sure the programme is widely accessible)
- Online or remote needs (the team may adapt certain roles to facilitate remote or online volunteering in the case of limited mobility or being based away from Malta. However, if possible, meeting volunteers face to face is highly valued.)



(Section 5) Ongoing Spaces To Leave Your Mark

Introducing our diverse volunteer roles at the Gabriel Caruana Foundation, each playing a vital part in our mission to build thriving communities through art and engagement:

Communications: Informing & Involving

- Join our dynamic communications team to help keep our community informed and involved. Whether you're a social media guru, a talented writer, or a creative designer, your skills will help us amplify our message, engage with stakeholders, and foster meaningful connections within our community.

Financial Support and Fundraising:

A Drive to Thrive - Are you passionate about making a difference? Join our fundraising team and drive our efforts to thrive. From organising events to cultivating donor relationships, your contributions will directly support our programmes, initiatives, and the long-term sustainability of the Foundation.

Production and Maintenance: Handy Help

- Roll up your sleeves and lend a hand in our production and maintenance team. Whether it's setting up for events, maintaining our facilities, or assisting with art installations, your practical skills and can-do attitude will help ensure that our space remains vibrant, welcoming, and well-maintained for all.

No matter your interest or expertise, there's a place for you at the Gabriel Caruana Foundation. Together, let's create art, build community, and make a lasting impact. Join us today!

As part of the GCF artistic and community engagement programme, the following activities have sprouted:

Whereabouts are you from?

This is a project supported by Il-Premju Tal-President Għall-Kreatività, which fund is administered by Arts Council Malta. The project has enabled the GCF to employ a Community Engagement Officer, Martina Camilleri, who has developed a Community Engagement Strategy and related Action Plan which includes five focus areas being: Communication and Evaluation, Volunteering, Engagement in ACTION.

Keywords: *Civic Engagement, Creativity, Social Change, Participatory Practices, Inclusion*



Birkirkara Residents' Work Group

One of the pilot projects Martina is working on is an Action Group based in Birkirkara formed by residents who would like to bring about change regarding mobility issues in Birkirkara. This is still in its infancy but the idea is to combine artistic interventions and community action.

A new initiative is that of looking into research with community involvement, by proposing an exercise in collecting oral histories. The aim is to get an experience of past, present and future views of the spaces and perspectives inhabiting them, within Birkirkara. The contact hours will include scoping out the idea, plan and structure for the direct practice, together with Birkirkara residents. This practice will be influential in future actions which entail the collection of oral histories, applied to different thematics. A closing 'celebration' may include the sharing of these oral histories with participants and the wider public, in ways ideated by those involved throughout the process.

Furthermore, the resident group is also active in reflective conversations and participatory activities around public space, just mobility practices and enriched civic engagement. Initiatives include think-tanks with stakeholders

and on the ground events in public spaces, welcoming and hoping to engage the wider public.

Keywords: *Mobility, Creativity, Social Change, Critical Reflection*

Layers of Being

Layers of Being, developed by Martina Camilleri for the Gabriel Caruana Foundation explores the thematics of healing, care and wellbeing through artistic practice, together with different communities, celebrating strength in diversity. This builds upon the Gabriel Caruana Foundation's and its collaborators' experience and ongoing initiatives within the field of art and social engagement.

The project involves an interdisciplinary group of artists including social practice artists, musicians, textile artists and performance artists. A collaborative, holistic investigation of the theme with diverse participants aims for an enriching, evolving experience for all those involved. Spread across three years, between 2023 and 2026, opportunities of exchange will occur with core participants from migrant, elderly and youth communities. Valuing sharing and communication, there will be multiple moments of engaging with the wider public based on the needs and desires of participants.

Keywords: *togetherness, participatory practices, connection, interdisciplinary*



SPRING Artistic Programme for Emerging Artists

The SPRING Artistic Programme is intended for emerging artists to be supported in their progress and develop as a community. It has been supported by Arts Council Malta between 2022 and 2024 and includes the development of new artistic work and exhibitions held at The Mill, most recently between February 2023 and March 2024.

The evolving SPRING programme has also included a series of internal workshops aimed at nurturing a sense of community between the artists, providing a space for critical reflection, and to share personal growth, challenges and success stories.

Keywords: *Community, Social Change, Critical Reflection, Artistic Growth*

(Section 6)

Appreciation Perks

Volunteers make the Mill's sails go round! The following are perks for Volunteers. Hours are tallied every month and are valid over a span of one calendar year.

- 1 Whereabouts are you from? Tote bag
- 1 GCF Publication
- Discount tokens at local food places
- Discount tokens at local Eco shops

15 hours:

- All of the aforementioned
- Early-bird registration on workshops, training sessions, conferences and other events organised by the Foundation or its project collaborators.

30 hours:

- All of the aforementioned
- Reduced prices on Gabriel Caruana Foundation activities

60 hours:

- All of the aforementioned
- Discount on merchandise
- Participation in team consultations on community events and participatory activities

120 hours:

- All of the aforementioned
- International Exchange opportunities (such as EU volunteering opportunities and international conferences).



(Section 7)

House Rules

- The minimum age for volunteers is 18 years and over
- Volunteers will need to attend the necessary orientations and complete background checks when required prior to assignment.
- Volunteers are expected to be on time for the assignment. In case of delays kindly inform the Programme Manager.
- All volunteers will wear identification while they are on duty. Type of identification is dependent on shift.
- The Foundation does not assume any liability and/or responsibility for the Health and Safety of the Volunteer.
- Any personal equipment used by the volunteers shall be their sole responsibility and the Foundation does not assume any liability and/or responsibility for the Health and Safety of the Volunteer.
- No equipment or material shall be used that leaves any residue and/or damages the venue, the artworks of the permanent collection, and the artworks therein. If any damage and/or maintenance is required the Volunteer shall be invoiced by the Foundation for the related expenses. Such invoice shall be paid by the Volunteer within 30 days from the date of the invoice.
- Emergency exits and signs, Health and Safety equipment and signs are to be unobstructed at all times. Health and safety orientation will be provided for all volunteers, covering emergency procedures, safe use of first aid equipment, and specific risks related to tasks.
- No smoking or the use of naked flame is allowed within The Mill.
- The Gabriel Caruana Foundation provides a safe and drug- and alcohol-free work environment. The use, possession, distribution, sale, or manufacture of illegal drugs while at the Gabriel Caruana Foundation events is prohibited. You are required to report for your assignment in appropriate mental and physical condition.
- Volunteers are encouraged to take breaks, stay hydrated and well nourished, and seek help related to stressors on or off their volunteering role. The Foundation would gladly

put volunteers in touch with any support needed, and strives to provide a productive, safe atmosphere for everyone.

- The Foundation has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of discrimination. We believe in treating everyone with respect and equality, regardless of their race, gender, age, religion, disability, or walk of life. Our community is built on inclusivity and acceptance, and we're committed to creating a welcoming and supportive environment for all. Any discriminatory behaviour will be addressed immediately to ensure everyone feels safe and valued.



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