

# GUIDE

F O R

# MARIST VOLUNTEERS





I slept and dreamed  
that life is full of joy.  
I woke and I saw that  
life is all service.  
I served and I saw  
that service is joy.

Khalil Gibran

## Preamble

Volunteers have a long history within societies and congregations, including the Marists. Their presence has taken on many forms, mainly service with little remuneration, exercised on their own or in groups, for varying periods, with, in most cases, religious or social motivation, or simply Marist connections.

For a long time, the work of volunteers was understood as a way of filling gaps in services provided by governments and/or institutions or, in the church itself, as missionary work across borders.

Today we recognize that volunteering has a place in its own right: mission is at the heart of the Marist charism, especially action on behalf of children and young people; volunteers collaborate in building up a culture of solidarity by promoting human rights.



## Brief glossary

**CMI:** Department Collaboration for Mission, International, of the General Administration

**AUs:** Administrative Units – Provinces or Districts

**CPVs:** Coordinators of Province Volunteering

**MoU:** *Memorandum of Understanding* – Agreement between the AUs sending and receiving the volunteers, and the volunteers themselves.

**Interprovincial Volunteering:** sending or receiving a volunteer from one Administrative Unit to another.

**Intra-provincial Volunteering:** volunteering within the Administrative Unit itself.

**Receiving Community:** the place where volunteers are accommodated and where they carry out their ministry..



## Introduction

The Institute recognises that volunteering is one form of sharing in Marist life and mission. It creates possibilities for and promotes volunteering at both the intra-provincial and inter-provincial levels.

This attitude grounds the following statements:

- Volunteers choose freely to participate in a community experience and carry out a ministry.
- An organised and well-defined process is needed for people to be volunteers; specific formation and continuous accompaniment are required.
- Marist volunteer work is done mainly within the Marist Institute and sometimes with partner organisations.
- Volunteers need to have the necessary aptitudes and dispositions for engaging in ministry.
- Volunteers take on commitments and responsibilities in the host community and work teams.
- Volunteers are invited to grow personally and to mature in faith, both integral to their life project.

The process of preparation and assessment for Marist volunteering is conducted in a collaborative manner between the Department of Collaboration for Mission, International – CMI, the Coordinators of Province Volunteering, CPVs, who form a Marist CPV Network, and the volunteers themselves.

This Guide provides clear guidelines for interprovincial volunteering in the discernment and preparation phase as well as the on-site period of ministry and community life (within a Marist community, a family or a specific residence for volunteers). This Guide does not replace the MoU but indicates its content and complements it.

## Marist Volunteering

Marist Volunteering is an effective tool for building a culture of encounter between nations and peoples; it is a powerful tool for sharing knowledge, skills and values, contributing significantly to poverty alleviation. All parties involved (those who send on mission, those who receive volunteers, and the volunteers themselves) are inter-related with a common purpose, well-defined roles and agreements.

As Marists, in a spirit of openness and simplicity, we make ourselves available locally or internationally, going beyond geographical or province boundaries; we recognise that the world is in continuous transformation and we are ready to face today's challenges; we abandon the culture of the 'ego' and promote the culture of 'eco-s', reducing the scandal of indifference and social inequalities; we are change agents, bridge builders, messengers of peace, committed to the transformation of the life circumstances of those around us; we are not afraid to take risks in going

to the peripheries, and advocating for the poorest and most vulnerable.

Thus, by 'interprovincial volunteering' we mean the mobilization of people from one Province to another for undertaking activities voluntarily, without receiving a salary or other remuneration, collaborating to make society a better place to live, especially for children and young people in situations of vulnerability, empowering them to stand up for themselves and reach their full human potential.

Marist volunteering depends on peoples' availability for generous service, expecting no return, following the example of Jesus of Nazareth: "I am among you as one who serves" (Lk 22:27). Jesus places service as a commitment to the promotion and defence of life. He told us: "The Son of Man did not come to be served. I have come to serve and to give my life for many" (Mk 10:45). In this sense, volunteering translates into a set of actions and initiatives of social and community importance, carried out in a collaborative and selfless way.

Being Marist means adopting a particular approach or identity in our way of life. We grow in a spirit of brotherhood through community life, a spirituality that springs from the heart, and a service of solidarity respectful of the rights and empowerment of the people we work with and for and of the volunteers themselves.

# Interprovincial Marist Volunteering

## Who is a Marist Volunteer?

Volunteers, in a general sense, are people who render unpaid service within a sponsor organisation, in a freely chosen, selfless, and responsible manner for a defined period of time. In the Marist context, volunteering involves community life, with the possibility of a faith journey, and the experience of being on mission. In this sense, Marist volunteers engage in the experience of being Marist (living as a community) and of acting as Marists (involvement in a ministry).

## Who can be a Marist Volunteer?

1. Volunteer - a Brother or lay Marist sent for a specific period of time to participate in the mission of an AU other than his or her own.
2. Marist Missionary Brother - a religious sent by his superiors for a specific mission.
3. Marist Lay missionary - a lay person sent to an AU other than his or her own for a specific mission.
4. Marist Intern – a brother or lay Marist who offers professional services in a Marist project or program

Volunteers may be sent to one of the eighty countries where the Marist Institute is present.

## Formation and Accompaniment

**Formation:** The preparation process for interprovincial voluntary work includes a Marist dimension (the elements of the Marist charism), an intercultural dimension, a personal growth dimension, and practical elements about being an interprovincial volunteer in an international context.

**Accompaniment:** volunteers are mentored throughout the various stages – the preparatory period, leaving home, the period on mission and on their return home. The focus is the discernment and well-being of the volunteers.

## Who sends and who receives volunteers?

**Who sends?** The Marist Province or District of origin of the volunteer after the process of formation and accompaniment, and after attending to the protocols for sending someone (obtaining personal information, preparing and signing an MoU, letter of recommendation from the Provincial etc.).

**Who receives?** The Marist Province or District where the Receiving Marist Community is located, in agreement with the Province of origin.

## What are the basic requirements?

- To accept Marist philosophy, principles of action and charism.
- A spirit and vision of solidarity in life and in the world.
- Minimum age 18 years;



- Having had at least one previous volunteer experience at local or provincial level.
- Minimum time available for volunteering according to the needs of the Receiving Community.
- Possessing the personal, professional or technical skills to engage in and take responsibility for the ministry entrusted to them.
- A balanced personality (affective maturity, tolerance, open-mindedness, resilience, the energy to face fatigue and possible setbacks, a capacity for teamwork and community life).
- The ability to let go of certain securities and comforts, accepting a life of simplicity.
- Participation in the formation process and other activities proposed by the CPV or his delegate.
- A capacity for dialogue and respect for different

religious and cultural expressions.

- Understanding of and a discerned approach to situations of vulnerability.
- Sharing and openness towards Christian living and an active life of faith.
- Language proficiency in the language of the host country.

## How do finances work?

The financial support of interprovincial volunteering varies according to each country's or each AU's reality. Some general indications follow (unless the AU establishes otherwise):

- The formation and Accompaniment of the volunteers are the responsibility of the AUs.
- The purchase of tickets from the sending AU to the destination country is the responsibility of the volunteers, the sending AU or some other organisation. Each AU has its own approach to this issue. The same is true for travel and health insurance.
- Accommodation and meals are the responsibility of the Receiving Community.
- Costs involved in the volunteers' ministry (transport, communication, sundry materials...) are the responsibility of the Receiving Community.
- For long-term volunteers, if necessary, a fixed monthly amount for personal expenses is appropriate. This does not constitute a salary.
- Personal choices of volunteers, such as outings, purchase of souvenirs etc. are their own responsibility.

Note. These and other topics will be detailed and agreed upon in the Financial Plan present in the *Memorandum of Understanding* - MoU.



## For Marist volunteers, solidarity is expressed in terms of:

- Freedom, equality and openness to diversity in the exercise of active citizenship.
- Responsibility for activities carried out with the beneficiaries of the ministry.
- Participation in the activities of their Host Community.
- Collaboration and teamwork.
- Free sharing of time and talents in the exercise of their mission.
- Complementary and collaborative work with local people, without replacing them.
- Harmonising the interests of the beneficiaries, the local culture and the Marist charism.
- Experience of interculturality.

- Sensitivity and growth in personal awareness through extended contact with different realities and cultures.
- Challenging the injustices and alienating structures that are blocking the advancement and progress of individuals and peoples.
- Acknowledging that volunteers themselves are often the greatest beneficiaries.

## Who to contact?

More information about Interprovincial Marist Volunteering can be obtained from the Coordinator of Province Volunteering - CPV - of local AUs or via an email to [cmi@fms.it](mailto:cmi@fms.it). Further information is on the website [www.champagnat.org](http://www.champagnat.org).

Once the first contact has been established, you will be directed and guided through the steps to follow to become an interprovincial volunteer.

The heart of a volunteer is not measured by its size, but by the depth of his or her commitment to make a difference in the lives of others.



## Some definitions

Interprovincial Marist Volunteering is coordinated by the Department of Collaboration for Mission, International – CMI in partnership with the Administrative Units (Provinces and Districts), Interprovincial bodies, following the guidelines and laws of each country.

Mode	Explanation
Individual	The person is sent individually from one AU to a Receiving Community in another.
Group	Volunteers are sent in a group from one AU to a Receiving Community in another.. Normally this applies to short term volunteers or special cases.

  

Duration	Explanation
Short Term Volunteer	Less than 3 months. Someone who wants to participate in the day to day work and life of the Receiving Community. This includes groups of volunteers who participate in Work Camps, Summer Camps or Immersions in another AU.
Medium Term Volunteer	3 – 6 months. Someone who wants to participate actively in the day to day work and life of the Receiving Community.
Long Term Volunteer	6 months or longer. Someone who wants to participate actively in the day to day work and life of the Receiving Community.

Typology	Explanation
Volunteer	Anyone who freely offers his/her time and skills to undertake any activity or role within a project or ministry of the Receiving community.
Intern	Various time frames. Young professionals, such as law students, are mentored by an experienced person in an office or project.
Professional Volunteering	A person with professional qualifications who volunteers to work as a professional or to build the capacity of local people. (Doctor, Teacher, Architect, Communication officer etc.)
Temporary Transfer	Brothers who are temporarily transferred to a different AU.
Participants in a special Initiative or Project	A person who joins a special project or initiative of the Institute. (e.g. Lavalla200, Solidarity with South Sudan).

Many small people, in small places,  
doing small things,  
can change the world

## Rights and responsibilities

To be a Marist volunteer means to establish a relationship of reciprocity of giving and receiving with the Marist Institute and the beneficiaries of a ministry. It means assuming responsibilities and having guaranteed rights.

### Rights of volunteers:

- To be treated without discrimination, and their freedom, dignity and religious faith respected, as well as their personal data safe-guarded.
- To participate in a ministry that accords with their knowledge, experience and motivation.
- To be respected and recognised for the value of their work and mission.
- To have access to initial and ongoing formation programmes.
- To receive support, information and guidance, materials and tools for assigned tasks, with monitoring and technical assistance if necessary.
- To have a work plan with defined times for completing their mission.
- To be engaged in a Receiving Community, being valued and listened to regarding their needs.
- To have a favourable working environment that meets health and safety requirements.
- To participate in decisions concerning their ministry and life as volunteers.
- To be consulted in the preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding – MoU – between the Marist Institute and them, which details the terms and conditions for Volunteering.
- To have occasions to share their experience during the period of volunteering and on their return.

## Responsibilities of volunteers:

### *1. To the Marist Provinces and Communities*

- Participate fully in the formation process and other proposed activities.
- Observe the principles and locally established standards related to the activity.
- Know and respect the policies, customs and protocols of the sending and receiving communities and provinces particularly those related to child protection.
- Maintain confidentiality (when requested) of information received or discovered in the course of their activities.
- Act in a diligent, collaborative and ethical manner.
- Act in a free and unselfish manner, without expecting financial compensation.
- Ensure the proper use of the resources and means placed at their disposal.
- Ensure participation, regularity and punctuality according to the commitments made.
- Not assume the role of representative of the Marist community without its knowledge or prior authorisation.
- Maintain an open and transparent dialogue with their mentors.
- Be aware of procedures for conflict resolution.
- Observe personal data protection and processing standards.



## *2. To the beneficiaries of their ministry*

- Respect the private life and dignity of each person.
- Respect their ideological convictions, religious beliefs and cultural practices.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Use common sense in resolving unforeseen matters, informing those in charge.
- Contribute to the personal and integral development of beneficiaries.
- Ensure their regular presence in organized activities.

### ***3. To the Brothers and Co-workers in the Receiving Community***

- Collaborate with Brothers and Co-workers, contributing to their work through sharing information and engaging in ministry.
- Contribute to the establishment of a relationship based on dialogue, mutual respect and collaboration.
- Participate actively in the dynamics of community life.

### ***4. To other volunteers (if any)***

- Respect the dignity and freedom of other volunteers, recognising them as peers and valuing their presence and work.
- Encourage teamwork, contributing to good communication and relationships.
- Help them settle in, get oriented and facilitate their participation

### ***5. To society in general***

- Foster a culture of solidarity.
- Promote Marist Volunteering;
- Know and respect the socio-cultural reality of the local area.
- Get to know, establish relationships and work collaboratively with partner institutions with the approval of the Receiving Community.
- Communicate Gospel values and the Marist charism through the way they live and act.



## Evaluation

Evaluation of personal impact and performance is done in a systematic and continuous way by both the volunteer and the different parties involved.

The CPV's and the Receiving Community are responsible for evaluating the performance and participation of the volunteer, who is invited to do a self-evaluation and, if necessary, to submit specific reports.

In addition to regular evaluation and feedback, a final report of the volunteer's time will be compiled, by both the volunteer and those who send and receive the volunteer.

## Recognition of what a Marist Volunteer is and does.

For us, the existence of volunteers in the Marist Institute is fundamental. They contribute to the life and mission of the Institute, following the dream of Marcellin Champagnat to educate and evangelise children and young people, especially the most vulnerable.

Besides transforming the lives of others, volunteers have their own lives transformed and given new meaning through their experience of presence and ministry in a cultural and geographical environment distinct from their own.

On their return, in addition to an upgrade in their *Curriculum Vitae*, volunteers are invited to be multipliers and seeds for new volunteers. It could be said that a new mission is beginning for them.

We hope that their relationship with the Marist Institute continues and is strengthened through staying in close contact and through their having other opportunities to take part in the life and mission of the province.

For more information, contact your Administrative Unit's CPV or write to [cmi@fms.it](mailto:cmi@fms.it)  
Download the digital version of this guide in this link: <http://bit.ly/guide-marist-volunteers>



Thinking about what you can do  
to improve our society?

Standing still, thinking about it,  
leads nowhere. Just complaining  
doesn't get you any further.

Change can start with you. Volunteer!



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**VOLUNTEERING**  
*Marist*

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