



THE INNBETWEEN
STUDENT CHAPLAINCY

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Hi everyone,

my name is Helen and I was a student board member responsible for the Wide Horizons events on Social Responsibility in the academic year 2019/2020. Every Wednesday evening (except the first Wednesday of the month), events on the topics of Social Responsibility, Sustainability, Arts and Culture and Science take place at The InnBetween on a rotating basis.

I came to The InnBetween for a meditation and I stayed for the rest of the academic year. The atmosphere of the place just made me feel at home and since I knew I wanted to volunteer somewhere this year, I took the opportunity when Petra, one of the chaplains, advertised the position as student board member after a meditation in August 2019.

My tasks consisted of organizing an event approximately every five weeks and helping out at other events for at least 4 hours per week (and taking out the trash once in a blue moon). The organization of events requires you to come up with creative ideas, contact other organizations, if necessary, purchase materials from the budget you are given, plan, practice, and set up and clean the space. As long as your idea fits loosely within the frame of your topic, you are free: workshops, discussions, clothing swaps, games, movie nights, (almost) anything is possible. I really loved this creative freedom and it gave me space to pursue my interests, such as women's rights, dive into interesting topics and bring them closer to others.

Attending the other student board members' events was fun as well because of their diversity of topics and the possibility to learn different things, which otherwise I maybe wouldn't have engaged with. You will also meet many other Maastricht-based student activists and activist groups by collaborating with different organizations.

I had not volunteered much before in my life, I never had any position with responsibility, and I didn't know anyone in Maastricht. To me, organizing events was a challenge that I threw myself into. On the other hand, the circumstances were perfect: The InnBetween has good connections to other organizations, a community already exists, and there are a lot of people who can help you out with different things. Because of all these pre-existing connections, being a student board member at The InnBetween is a great opportunity for those without much "leadership" experience, who are up for a challenge, as well as of course for everyone who is more experienced in these things. Any way, you will be encouraged to share your passions and your activism.

I'm not going to lie, sometimes I was really worried that something would go wrong, no one would turn up to my events, people would be disappointed... but everything always worked out somehow. The thing that I struggled with the most were unreliability or simply delayed responses from other organizations and, as a result, insecurities on whether an event could take place as planned. But at the InnBetween, there are always many people willing to plan with you and help you out. I cannot count the times Rachelle has said that she would help me (and she always did). The community is really lovely, and you don't have to be afraid of doing anything wrong.

For me, The InnBetween was an invaluable part of my Maastricht life: a place to meet friends, to learn, to explore. A challenge and an opportunity. I would not have expected everything to feel familiar so soon. I learned a lot: I improved my communication skills and learned how to work in a team. I got better at showing initiative. I faced my fear of talking in front of a crowd, several times. The InnBetween was a fixed point in my life. You meet new people and get to know the other volunteers, have good conversations and enjoy great (free) food at Tafelen or during the team meetings on the first Wednesday of the month. There is always someone to chat and have a cup of tea with and it is a place where you can just be yourself. I am very happy that I took this chance and I am grateful for the nice people I met and experiences I made.

In case you are still not convinced: This volunteer position will look great on your CV aaaand you get some money (bestuursmaanden) in the end! :D But even without those two benefits, becoming a student board member at The InnBetween was a great decision and I would recommend it to anyone willing to create and share meaningful experiences!

Yours,
Helen