

Proactive and Reactive Media Examples

Note:

I do not yet have a real media placement to draw on, so this is a mock exercise built in the style of Forestry England, based on close reading of their processes (along with comparable bodies such as National Trust and English Heritage).

This piece is grounded in a real organisation I volunteered with – ‘GROW Community Garden’ in association with Jubilee Community Church in Cape Town – where I supported the garden and engaged with local families between 2018 and 2021.

While the organisation and my role are real; the specific campaign and quotes below are invented for this exercise. None of this written piece is an actual reflection of ‘GROW Community Garden’, it is simply based on real events as a suitable base for context.

This project is designed to show two skills:

1. An ability to tell a positive story of work being done.
2. An ability to protect the story’s image when it is questioned.



Figure 1 & 2: Photos from the real GROW Community Garden in Cape Town

PROACTIVE – Press Release Pitch to a Local Outlet

(Fictional piece for GROW Community Garden, pitching to a local Cape Town community newspaper)

GROW Community Garden Opens Its Gates for Its Autumn Vegetable Sale

GROW Community Garden is inviting local residents and members of Jubilee Community Church to its first Autumn Vegetable Sale on Saturday, the 25th of April.

The garden will be open to the public for a morning to buy some fresh produce, witness demonstrations of how we plant and harvest our crops, and some children's activities to boot! All of the proceeds going straight back to supporting the local community who keep the garden alive.



"This garden is like my child, and I am very excited to show it off to the local community. The Autumn Sale is our way showing people exactly what's happening here. I'm so excited!"

"Uncle" Mervin



This event will be the first time that our fresh vegetables will be sold to the public, so be the first to try our soon-to-be Citywide famous produce!

This event comes as GROW looks to increase its school's volunteer base during the Winter season! Looking for schoolboys and schoolgirls hoping to take part in their community service projects.

Long-standing volunteer, Nathan, says: *"I started volunteering here a few years ago and it completely changed how I view my garden. Its such an important project to be a part of, and I'm excited to show it off!"*

Event details:

Date: Saturday, 25 April, 9am-1pm

Location: GROW Community Garden, Observatory, Cape Town

REACTIVE – Holding statement

(Scenario: a local journalist, researching a wider piece on volunteering in Cape Town's townships, contacts GROW asking whether the garden relies too heavily on short-term privileged student volunteers rather than building sustainable local capacity. This is a common critique of this kind of project.)

Statement from GROW Community Garden

This is a fair question to be asking, and we take this very seriously.

GROW is run day-to-day by local coordinators and gardeners, most notably Mervin. The project could not feasibly run without our long-term community members keeping the garden afloat.

Students from nearby schools volunteering do support the work that we do, but they don't lead it. We always love to have more hands on our team so that we can get more manual labour done without exhausting anyone, but they don't take away roles from other community members.

Our approach has always been for visiting volunteers to work alongside the same local team over an extended period. We want the students to connect with the local community; it is actually one of our primary goals.

We know that 'voluntourism' is a problem in this sector, but we sincerely believe that it does not apply to GROW specifically. We strive to make sure this does not become a problem for us, and we believe it's something every organisation like ours should be asked about.

We'd rather be judged on whether the garden is still here, still feeding families, and still run by the local team in five or ten years' time. We are happy to talk to anybody through exactly how our volunteer time is structured, feel free to ask any further questions.

Thank you for raising this matter, God bless you.

Yours faithfully,

GROW Community Garden spokesperson

