

GSoC and Outreachy program (mentors wanted)

Daniel Garcia Moreno

>> Hello, everyone. My name is Aija and I'll be the moderator for this talk. So please welcome Daniel Garcia Moreno who will talk about the GSoC and Outreachy.

>> Hello. My name is Daniel Garcia Moreno and today I want to talk about the GSoC and Outreachy program on the relation with the GNOME community of these programs. This talk is focused for mentors. It is also for students but it's more so for the bloggers and other contributors that can help in the program as mentors or to promote this.

So let's start. For those of you who don't know, the Google Summer of Code is a program to promote the open source for students. It's a three-month program where some students collaborate with open source projects and develop some projects during the summer and Google pays some money for this work. It's a really good program for our students because they can earn some money in the summer. And it's really good for open source projects it's you have people -- you have money in your project. You have people working with pay for three months. So this is really good for the open source community. And it's a really good opportunity for students. So this Summer of Code is every year. During the summer it takes three months.

We also have the Outreachy program, which is a similar program, but it is not just for students. It is more oriented to promote diversity on these open source projects. So it is mostly geared towards people that will not or is hard to contribute to open source projects like women, we don't have a lot of women in the open source. We are trying to fix that with this kind of project. Or people with other disadvantages like minorities that have problems to get access to the technology or something like that. So this program is similar. It is like three months internship. The interns doesn't have to be university students like in the Summer of Code. So it's open to more people, I think. And it is the same. It's three months of paid work for the project and for the intern. This program happens twice a year. Once from December to May and the other one from -- I don't remember the months. But I think it ends now, the second part, but you can take a look to the page, to the web page and see the dates. Oh, it is here. Okay.

So these are the programs. And the main problem with these programs because it is really good for the students and the interns. Usually there are a lot of interns because it is a good thing to do during the summer or during the year to participate in an open source project, learn something and earn some money. So there is not a lot of problem to get some interns but there are problems to get mentors. This project needs someone to propose the project to do and to guide the intern during this month. To guide and evaluate the work done.

Because these people are not -- are newcomers or usually they're newcomers so they need someone to mentor during this project. And that takes time and so it is -- there are a few mentors and we need more. I think we need more.

So the mentoring process is not a problematic process. It is not really hard, but it takes some time, not a lot of time, but you need to spend some hours every week to do this. So before the internship, the mentors propose some ideas, we have the Wiki and every developer can propose their ideas. These ideas will be accepted or not by the Outreachy team. And when you have an idea you can get in touch with possible applicants. So usually they will ask in the channels that you

provide or by mail they will ask and the mentors who guide these applicants because he or (inaudible). [Lost presenter].

>> Hello? I think that we lost Daniel.

>> Yes, we lost him. He will be back. He wrote in the chat that his computer crashed.

>> Oh, okay. Thank you.

>> Okay. I'm back. Sorry for this. I don't know why but my computer just went down.

Okay. I will continue it. So what I was saying is that the mentors who evaluate this proposed ideas and decide what interns will receive the money and will work during the process.

During the Outreachy program the mentor or the guide will review the work and help with the code. They usually maintain the work or something like that. But also, they'll keep track of the work and ask every week or every few days ask if the intern can continue or if it is brought with help or something like that. We have some documentation and this kind of work. So the time that was spent depends a lot on the intern because there are some people that can work alone, and other people need for experience.

And at the end the mentors will evaluate the work and provide feedback because there are some feedback and checkpoints and the money is not given in one pay. It is given in several different months. So once a month you need to evaluate if the intern is doing the work. So why should I mentor? Because it has a lot of advantages. It takes a lot of time. You will need to spend some time mentor the user. It is possible that being a developer or a GNOME contributor, maybe you can finish the task earlier if you write the code. The student has some motivation to work on this because the student receives the money and it is learning. So all the same things are for the intern, but the mentor doesn't receive anything. And the student will work for three months and maybe at the end of the program the student will disappear. So why should I mentor.

But the thing is that I have to mentor because maybe for some reason, maybe in the past I was an intern. I would be able to be an intern because there was a mentor there. So now is my turn to help others and to join to the community and to get this and be able to grow. Maybe, maybe I can use this program to promote projects that I have no time to work on. I have some idea that I don't spend time on that so I can propose some projects and have students to work on that. It is possible to also reward some students that now are corroborating with the community because these communities are big enough to have students. This program can benefit them. And it is really good to bring new people to the GNOME community.

So, for example, I like a lot these programs and I am trying to participate in all of this. So for my projects or the project that I'm maintaining, these are all the interns that I have since 2018. So for Fractal you can see we have a lot of interns working on this. I can remember Julian was working. Julian was a known contributor. We have also other people that contribute less but we have an improvement in the project. Right now we have Alejandro working on this. He's a noncontributor for the project but this year he's working as an intern.

For the GNOME translation editor, we have also some interns. All of these -- I'm trying to use this program to promote some functionality that I don't have time to work on. So we can have someone working on that. Without this program I'm really sure that this project doesn't get all of these contributions.

The important thing about this talk is I want the people to participate here or at the end with some proposals because this is not perfect but I think that it will be better because right now I can see that there are not a lot of proposals because this -- I think that even in almost all the years that I proposed something I get some intern. It is really good for me, but I want to have some programs to get interns. I mean, I want to -- I would like to have to request intern and to fight with other projects or with other GNOME project to get the intern because there are a lot of proposals. But in some of these programs my proposal was the only one. So I think that we need more mentors.

How can we improve this? I was thinking a bit. I think that I don't have the answer but maybe we can try something. So maybe we can try to keep track of the past intern and try to ask every year to mentor. So maybe they can give back something that they received in the past. We can ask companies related with the project to promote this for the employees and to give some time for mentoring inside the GNOME. Maybe I'm really sure that a lot of companies will be happy to let one or two hours a week for the employees to be mentoring someone. There were no new people that were interested in working on their company. And we can try to maybe -- we can try to follow students or interns because they're interns that participate in the program and we lost them after the program.

So I know that this is really hard because everyone has their issues and it is not the same when you have work to do or it's really hard to keep the people in the community and we can try to improve this or it's something. I don't know. If you have some ideas, we can try to improve this.

>> Sorry to interrupt. We have a few minutes left.

>> Okay. I have two slides. I can finish in one minute. As a student, you can make it easy for the mentor to try and not take a lot of time from the mentor. Try to work async. And if you have no time to mentor, if you're not confident to be mentor because you don't know the technology or something like that you can co-mentor. So two people can be mentor for one person. Or you can try to help maybe not as a mentor but as an active member of the community where there are some interns. You can try to review or ask the intern and the mentor how this is going, if you can help or something like that.

And that's all that I have to say. So --

>> Thank you. Thank you for the great talk. So we have a couple of minutes left for questions. There are many questions. So if anyone else has any questions post them in the chat.

I'll start with the first question. There's a huge gap for non-English speakers to get into this program, for example, is there a program to add a translator or add other languages?

>> I think that all of this depends on the mentor because I'm a Spanish speaker so I can mentor Spanish people in Spanish. The official communication is in English. For example, right now with Alejandro I do the day-to-day talk with him in Spanish because we talk Spanish. So it all depends on the mentor. If the mentor talks other language, I think it's okay. We can try to promote this or for non-English speakers maybe try to help and fill the official forum. For example, the Summer of Code you need to do the paperwork in English. I think for the Outreachy program it's the same.

>> Thank you. Another question, is there any open things for other things other than translation and coding, things like that?

>> The problem it's not just for programming. It's for collaborating with an open source. So it could be possible to propose projects for translation, for design or for everything else. Not just programming. So any mentor can provide something related with the project but not just code. So it is possible. We just need to propose that project.

>> Okay. Thank you. We have three questions. I'll go with the third one which will be the last one and maybe you'll be able to answer them in another part. So the last question for today. What are your thoughts for students who are interested to solve newcomer and later work with small projects once they get an idea? So for students that are not in Summer for Code?

>> Yes, I think this is the same for the mentor or the blogger to explain how to solve this and to have the parties to explain all the things instead of doing everything because it is always easier to do by yourself because you know the code base. But in the long-term it is better to explain to someone and to let them, to learn how to do that. So we need people that spend more time in this task instead of coding maybe. But I think it is hard to promote this kind of work because it is a mentoring work. So this is really hard for newcomers because there are a few target -- it is really hard always to ask do they know about how to do something because you would think that you are really stupid asking stupid questions. But we need to explain that there are no stupid questions and you will always strive to do that.

>> Okay.

>> But I don't know how to fix that. There are people working on that. I think that we can try to collaborate more.

>> Okay. So thank you for your talk. Feel free to continue discussion in the chat. This will be all for today's talk. But don't forget the cocktail class with Melissa in less than an hour. It will be in Track one. So we hope to see you tomorrow. Thank you.

>> Thank you.