

General Information



KEY INFORMATION ABOUT SLOVAKIA

Capital: Bratislava
Official Language: Slovak
Population: 5,453,915 (as of March 25, 2026)*
Currency: Euro (EUR)
Calling Code: +421

KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

GDP per capita: US\$ 25,992.7 (as of 2024)**
Real GDP growth: 1.9%**
Unemployment rate in 2025: 5.4%***

Statistics and Demographics



18.2%

In 2025, 18.2% of the adult population engaged in organised volunteering, representing a significant decline from ~35% in 2023 and 36% in 2019. Unorganised volunteering stood at approximately 25% in 2025.****

Total number of volunteers in 2025****:

There is no official national register of volunteers. Based on the 2025 representative survey (18.2% of adults engaged in organised volunteering), an estimated ~792,000 adults volunteered in an organised form in 2025 – roughly half the estimated ~1,488,000 in 2023. The Statistical Office of the SR last recorded 181,769 volunteers in NGOs in 2019.

Annual economic value of volunteering: Regular assessment of the economic value of volunteering is not implemented in Slovakia. According to the Statistical Office of the SR (2019, latest available), 181,769 volunteers in NGOs contributed 13,300,485 hours, representing a total work value of €53,507,851. The 2023 research shows a decrease in average volunteer intensity to 12 hours per volunteer per month (from 18 hours in 2011), indicating a shift towards more episodic engagement.*****

Volunteer experience per gender and age group (percentage of the total population)****



Gender is not a significant determinant of volunteering in Slovakia. Gender differences appear in the areas of volunteering rather than participation rates: men are more active in sports and environmental activities, women in social services. Data on non-binary individuals is not collected in national volunteering research.



In 2023, organised volunteering was age-inclusive, with participation rates ranging from 30.9% (65+) to 37.9% (35-44), showing no statistically significant differences between age groups. By 2025, age became a significant differentiator (p=0.014): participation dropped across all groups, most sharply among older adults (65+: 10.2%), while the youngest group (18-24: 26.2%) retained the highest engagement. This marks a shift toward age-selective volunteering concentrated among young adults.

Motivation for Volunteering****

The predominant motivator for individuals engaging in volunteer activities in Slovakia is their values. Volunteering serves as a platform for expressing altruistic and humanitarian values. The second most significant factor influencing volunteering is personal enhancement, signifying that individuals participating in volunteer work aspire to foster psychological growth and development through active involvement. A third crucial motivation for volunteering is the pursuit of understanding, involving a desire to expand one's knowledge about the world and to exercise and develop skills, thereby viewing volunteering as an avenue for acquiring knowledge, skills, and abilities. Additionally, volunteering is perceived as an opportunity to fortify social relationships.

DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEERING*****

The Act on Volunteering defines a volunteer as an individual who, based on his/her free decision, performs a voluntary activity based on his/her ability, skill or knowledge for another person with his/her consent. The volunteer's activities align with the fulfilment of the public interest.

SOCIAL CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF VOLUNTEERING****

The term volunteering is well-known; it is often used in public discourse. Its importance was mainly strengthened by the events connected with COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine. Volunteering is perceived positively, but people mainly associate it with environmental activities, the social field and humanitarian aid. There is a lack of understanding of the broader context of participation and active citizenship supporting democracy. The involvement of work teams in volunteer activities is becoming part of the corporate culture in the private and public sectors. However, these are primarily one-time events without the ambition to motivate employees to volunteer long-term. A significant part of the public in Slovakia still believes that volunteers would not be needed if the state fulfils its responsibilities.

Education Levels and Volunteering****

Education is one of the strongest predictors of volunteering in Slovakia (p<0.001). In 2023, 44.4% of university-educated adults engaged in organised volunteering, compared to just 18.9% of those with elementary education. The 2025 data confirm this pattern: higher education remains the strongest predictor (26.0%), while participation fell sharply across all groups – most notably among those with secondary education without a diploma (17.9%) and those with a secondary diploma (13.8%).

Types of Volunteer Activities****

The survey in 2023 revealed a shift in the preferences of volunteers in the areas they engage in. In 2023, the largest share (40%) of volunteers participated in activities related to the protection and development of the environment. In 2019, 18% of volunteers were engaged in this area. 23% of volunteers were engaged in social services, 18% in culture, 17% in youth organizations, 15% in humanitarian aid, 12% in sports, and the same in volunteering, 9% in education and the same percentage in health, and 4% in advocacy. It is typical of many people involved in formal volunteering that they are involved in more than one area. Volunteers are associated mostly with NGOs, but there is no statistical data about this.

*Source: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/slovakia>

**Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=SK>

***Source: <https://slovak.statistics.sk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/rozsahovane-aktivita-volonterskej-sluzy-v-slovensku-2025.pdf>

****Source: <https://slovak.statistics.sk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/rozsahovane-aktivita-volonterskej-sluzy-v-slovensku-2025.pdf>

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****Source: Brozmanová Gregorová, A. et al. (2025), Dobrovoľníctvo na Slovensku v čase krízy a mimo nej, <https://doi.org/10.24040/2025.9788055723075>

*****Source: Statistical Office of the SR, 2019 https://datacube.statistics.sk/#/view/sk/VBD_SLOVSTAT/ns2006rs/v_ns2006rs_DO_00_00_sk and Brozmanová Gregorová, A. et al. (2025), Dobrovoľníctvo na Slovensku v čase krízy a mimo nej, <https://doi.org/10.24040/2025.9788055723075>

*****Source: <https://www.slovak.statistics.sk/pravne-predpisy/sk/zkz/2011/406/>

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Measuring the Impact of Volunteering*

In Slovakia, regular assessment of the impact of volunteering on individuals and society is not implemented. We only have partial data from which we can estimate the economic value of volunteer work. According to the data from the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic in 2019 (the latest available data), 181,769 male and female volunteers worked in non-governmental non profit organisations, contributing a total of 13,300,485 hours. This represents a total work value of 53,507,851 Euros.

We can also calculate the economic impact of volunteering based on information about tax assignments in Slovakia. Volunteers who volunteer at least 40 hours per year may be assigned 3% of the paid taxes (for non-volunteers, only 2% of the paid taxes) for the selected NGO.



Quality Standards in the Field of Volunteering****

The Quality standards for volunteer management were established in 2014 through financial support from the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. Based in the experience with implementing standards, the accreditation for volunteering activities was introduced in 2023 as part of an amendment to the Act on Volunteering. Accreditation serves as a state verification process but is not mandatory for volunteering activities.

National E-platform for Volunteering

DobroBáza is the national online database of volunteer opportunities in Slovakia, launched in 2024 and accessible via www.dobrovolnictvo.sk. It is operated by the Platform of Volunteer Centers and Organizations in cooperation with regional volunteer centers. The platform is built on the [growni.sk](http://www.growni.sk) system, which also provides its ongoing technical development and support.

Challenges to the Development of Volunteering***

From the perspective of individuals (barriers to getting involved):

- Lack of time
- Lack of interest in organised volunteering
- Not being asked or invited to help
- Demanding life situation (family, work or school commitments)
- Belief that helping people is the responsibility of the state

From the perspective of organisations:

- Insufficient financial resources for adequate volunteer support
- Unsuccessful recruitment activities and lack of time and staff capacities
- Absence of subsidy schemes focused on volunteer infrastructure and long-term volunteering
- Lack of knowledge and skills for working with volunteers

Emerging structural challenges (2025):

- Hostile political environment toward civil society and NGOs, including cancellation of subsidy schemes
- Volunteer fatigue following multiple crises (COVID-19, war in Ukraine)
- Growing economic uncertainty and "time poverty" limiting capacity for regular engagement
- Shift toward episodic, short-term forms of volunteering at the expense of sustained commitment
- Volunteer centres lacking stable financial support despite legal conditions being in place

Institutional and Legal Framework for Volunteering****

The Law on Volunteering defines volunteers, voluntary work, terms and conditions for hosting and sending organisations, including rules for signing volunteering contracts and conditions for accreditation in the field of volunteer activities. The responsible authority for volunteering is Ministry of Interior of Slovak republic. The Strategy for civil society development in Slovakia for the years 2022–2030 identifies challenges in volunteering and proposes measures to address them.

The Strategy for Youth (2021-2028) outlines various methods to achieve its goal of increasing young people's involvement in volunteer activities domestically and internationally. In the realm of volunteering, it establishes 12 measures and several associated metrics. Strategy for Education for volunteering in formal education and provides recommendations on enhancing and improving this aspect.

Financial Support for the Development of Volunteering



Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of Slovak Republic manages a grant scheme called 'Programs for Youth,' with one specific area dedicated to youth volunteering. This scheme supports activities of regional volunteer centers in the field of youth volunteering. In 2023, within the framework of the amendment to the Law on Volunteering, opportunities were created for the introduction of a financial mechanism for the support of long-term volunteer programs by the state, but they have not yet been implemented in practice due to a lack of funding.

National Award and Recognitions for Volunteering**

The Heart in the Palm award

For over two decades, the Heart in the Palm award has been bestowed upon volunteers, organisations, and projects. Annually, regional volunteer centres across all 8 regions present volunteer awards. The most compelling stories progress to the national awards. The event is organised by the Platform of Volunteer Centres and Organisations.



Trends in the Development of Volunteering***

The most significant trend affecting volunteering in Slovakia is the increasingly hostile political environment toward civil society and NGOs – the primary spaces for volunteer action. The government has been cancelling subsidy schemes in key areas (e.g., human rights, culture), leaving volunteer centres without stable financial support and undermining conditions for volunteering development.

The 2025 research documents a sharp and historic decline in organised volunteering – from ~34% in 2023 to 18.2% in 2025 – driven by a combination of volunteer fatigue after multiple crises (COVID-19, war in Ukraine), growing economic uncertainty, and rising distrust in institutions and NGOs. Volunteering is shifting toward more episodic and online forms – online volunteering rose from 11.7% in 2023 to 26.4% in 2025. Corporate volunteering is growing but remains largely limited to one-off events. Regular and systematic research on volunteering is still insufficient to capture these rapid changes in a timely manner.

Key Stakeholders in the Development of Volunteering

- Platform of Volunteer Centres and Organisations (PVCO)
- Regional volunteer centres (1 centre in each region, 7 of them gathered under a network run by PVCO)
- Ministry of Education, research, development and youth of the Slovak Republic
- Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for the Development of Civil Society under the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic
- Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic
- Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations
- Youth Council of Slovakia

Research in the Field of Volunteering

Regular and systematic research on volunteering in Slovakia is not carried out, and no official national register of volunteers exists. The most recent representative studies were conducted in 2023 and 2025 under the VEGA research project led by Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, providing the first comparable longitudinal data capturing volunteering before and after the major societal crises of the last decade. These studies now serve as the primary evidence base for understanding the scope, structure, and trends of volunteering in Slovakia.

*Source: Statistical office of Slovak republic (http://datacube.statistics.sk/#/view/sk/VBD_SLOVSTAT/ns2006rs/v_ns2006rs_00_00_00_sk)

**Source: <https://www.srdcenadlani.sk/>

***Source: Brozdanová Gregorová, A. et al. (2025). Dobrovoľníctvo na Slovensku v čase krízy a mimo nej. <https://doi.org/10.24040/2025.9788055723075> and Ministry of Interior of the SR (2020). Analýza NP Wskv. Available at: https://www.mimv.sk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/analiza_np_wskv.pdf

****Source: https://www.dobrovolnicestrasa.sk/images/stories/files/2023/RR05_2022-2030.pdf

*****Source: <https://www.dobrovolnicestrasa.sk/aktivity/znacka-kvality> and https://www.mimv.sk/?dobrovolnictvo_vyзва_akreditacia