

General Information



KEY INFORMATION ABOUT GERMANY

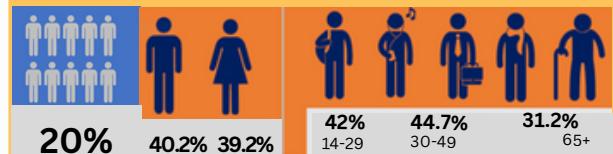
Capital: Berlin**Official Language:** German**Population:** 84.7 million (as of 2023)***Currency:** Euro (EUR)**Calling Code:** +49

KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

GDP per capita: 48,750 euro (as of 2023)****Real GDP growth in 2022:** 3.8%*****Unemployment rate in September 2023:** 5.7%****

Statistics and Demographics*****

Total number of volunteers: 16.6 million (as per 2023)



60% of volunteers dedicated up to 2 hours per week to their voluntary activities

17.1% engaged for 6 hours or more per week.

The average volunteer in Germany is more or less equally likely to be male or female, of middle age (30 to 49 years, 44.7%), with higher education (51.1%).

The engagement rate among individuals with a high level of education stands at 51.1%, among those with a medium level of education at 37.4%, and among those with a low level of education at 26.3%. The disparities in voluntary engagement based on education have increased between 1999 and 2019.

The most engaged age group is the 30 to 49-year-olds, with 44.7%, while the proportion of volunteers among 14 to 29-year-olds stands at 42.0%. Across all age groups, the percentage of volunteers has increased since 1999, particularly among those aged 65 and above. In this group, the engagement rate has risen from 18.0% in 1999 to 31.2% in 2019.

Motivation for Volunteering*****

Volunteering offers numerous benefits, serving as a fulfilling endeavor for individuals. Firstly, it fosters social responsibility, allowing people to contribute to causes they care about while providing happiness and stability. Secondly, it promotes self-exploration and skill development, enhancing confidence and offering opportunities for personal growth. Thirdly, it facilitates social connections and friendships, fostering a sense of community and diversity. Additionally, volunteering provides career opportunities, enabling individuals to explore professions and build valuable networks. Moreover, it encourages political engagement, empowering individuals to influence societal change. Lastly, volunteering boosts self-esteem, as volunteers receive gratitude and recognition, reinforcing their sense of worth. Overall, volunteering is a meaningful activity that benefits both individuals and society, offering opportunities for personal fulfillment, skill development, and social impact.

DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is a term that encompasses activities typically carried out for the benefit of society and not as part of conventional paid employment. Due to terminological traditions as well as societal and political interpretations, this phenomenon in Germany is subdivided into terms such as "voluntary work," "engagement," "civic engagement," "voluntary activity," etc., each situated within its own context.

SOCIAL CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF VOLUNTEERING****

Volunteering is vital for Germany for numerous reasons. It acts as the engine of democracy, nurturing active citizenship and community involvement. Through volunteering, individuals enhance societal well-being, foster social cohesion, and fortify democratic institutions. Voluntary work in various associations, initiatives, and projects embodies democratic ideals like collaboration, negotiation, and fair play, thus strengthening democratic values at the grassroots level. According to the 2019 Volunteering Survey, approximately 28.8 million people engage in voluntary activities. Moreover, volunteering holds a central place in the government's agenda, reflecting its commitment to enhancing civic engagement and supporting volunteerism.

Types of Volunteer Activities*****

The majority of people engage in sports and physical activities, accounting for 13.5%. This is followed by involvement in culture and music at 8.6%, social services at 8.3%, and school and kindergarten activities at 8.2%. Additionally, 8.0% of volunteers in 2019 reported involvement in activities related to refugees or asylum seekers.



Impact of Volunteering

Volunteering addresses social needs, fosters cohesion, and drives innovation, enhancing societal well-being. For volunteers, it offers opportunities for personal growth, skill development, and fulfillment while promoting empathy and active citizenship. Overall, volunteering creates stronger communities, empowers individuals, and contributes to positive social change.

Measuring the Impact of Volunteering

No data available for the moment

Quality Standards in the Field of Volunteering

No data available for the moment

National E-platform for Volunteering

No data available for the moment



The State Award for Volunteering

The German Volunteering Award/German Civic Engagement Award is the most significant accolade in Germany for those engaged in volunteering and civic engagement. It serves to inspire commitment, to make such activities visible, and to strengthen appreciation. In 2022, 463 individuals and initiatives were nominated. The German Civic Engagement Award has been initiated and sponsored by the Bündnis für Gemeinnützigkeit since 2009. This alliance comprises large umbrella organisations and independent organisations, as well as experts in the non-profit sector. Funding partners include the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the German Television Lottery and the Deutsche Bahn Foundation.

Challenges to the Development of Volunteering in Germany

Challenges for volunteers and organizations include time constraints, recruitment difficulties, training needs, burnout risks, legal hurdles, limited resources, diversity issues, and risk management. Volunteers juggle commitments, while organizations struggle to recruit and retain volunteers, provide training, manage risks, and navigate legal requirements. Financial constraints also hinder efforts. Ensuring inclusivity and addressing these challenges require collaborative solutions, effective volunteer management, and supportive policies.

Key Stakeholders in the Development of Volunteering*

Volunteers are primarily involved in sports clubs, church institutions, and charitable organizations. In 2021, the Protestant Church recorded over 935,000 volunteer workers.



Institutional and Legal Framework for Volunteering in Germany

Currently there is no legal framework or definition for volunteering in Germany on a federal level. Instead, the political competence for volunteering policy lies with the German states (Bundesländer). Effectively, there is also no national legal framework for a volunteering infrastructure. The only area in which the national level may constitute legal frameworks is the relatively small area of voluntary services. In October 2010 the German Government published a National Strategy on Volunteering that was elaborated following a wide consultation process through the 'National Forum for Engagement and Participation' organised by the BBE (National Network for Civil Society). In the eyes of most voluntary organisations and third sector-associations, a comprehensive law for civic engagement would be helpful, but in order to achieve this, a thorough public discussion would be needed.

The governing parties aim to create a new federal engagement strategy in their coalition agreement for 2021-2025. This strategy will guide federal ministries in promoting engagement and include measures to strengthen volunteering. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs leads its development and coordinates between ministries. It will reflect the concerns of volunteers and individuals, with input from civil society through discussions facilitated by the German Foundation for Civic Engagement and Volunteering, supported by the National Network for Civil Society.



Financial Support for the Development of Volunteering in Germany

Most organizations operate with very limited resources. More than half of the civil society organizations in Germany have total revenues of less than 10,000 euros. Only 27 percent of the organizations have paid employees. Civil society organizations can draw on many different sources of income, such as membership fees, self-generated funds from business operations, public grants, or donations from individuals and companies. Often, a mix of different income sources is characteristic, with the composition depending on the type of activities offered. 83 percent of organizations receive their income from at least two of the various sources captured in the ZiviZ-Survey. The most common sources of income for organizations are membership fees (85 percent), followed by donations (66 percent), and self-generated funds (49 percent). 38 percent of organizations receive public grants.

Trends in the Development of Volunteering in Germany

In 2022, according to a comprehensive evaluation by ZiviZ, there were 656,888 civil society organizations in Germany, with registered associations (eingetragene Vereine) making up 94 percent of these. While the pace of founding new associations is decreasing, non-profit corporations and cooperatives are experiencing a notably strong increase.

The pandemic has worsened existing difficulties for organizations in recruiting and keeping members and volunteers. However, the impact varies across different sectors. Sports clubs are experiencing notable declines in volunteers, unlike sectors such as environmental, civil protection, and communal provision tasks, where many organizations report increases in members and engaged volunteers.

Research in the Field of Volunteering

Two major surveys in Germany, the Freiwilligensurvey and ZiviZ-Survey, play vital roles in understanding volunteering and civil society organizations. The Freiwilligensurvey, conducted every five years since 1999 with 15,000 to 20,000 interviews, focuses on volunteering activities among individuals aged 14 and above. It collects data through telephone interviews, funded by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, with Kantar Public taking over in 2024. Meanwhile, the ZiviZ Survey provides insights into civil society organizations' development and infrastructure, including associations, foundations, and cooperatives. Its recent findings were discussed at a public event in Berlin on November 15, 2023.