

## General Information



## KEY INFORMATION ABOUT POLAND

**Capital:** Warsaw  
**Official Language:** Polish  
**Population:** 37.437 million\*\*  
**Currency:** Polish zloty (PLN)  
**Calling Code:** +48

## KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

**GDP per capita:** 846 billion EUR (total)\*\*  
**Real GDP growth:** 4%\*\*  
**Unemployment rate in February 2026:** 6.1%\*\*

For the purposes of this report, the primary and authoritative statistical source on volunteering in Poland is the dataset produced by Statistics Poland (GUS). The report Volunteering in 2022 (published 12 October 2023) provides the only nationally representative measurement of both formal and informal volunteering. Its methodology is based on the international ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work.

## DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEERING

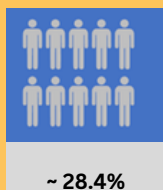
Poland does not operate under a single, universal definition of volunteering across all research, administrative and statistical systems. While the Public Benefit and Volunteer Work Act of 24 April 2003 provides the country's only binding legal definition of a "volunteer," the term volunteering itself is understood and operationalised differently across the principal research institutions that measure civic engagement. As a result, several parallel definitions coexist in national data, each shaped by the methodological choices, scope and purpose of the institution conducting the measurement.

## SOCIAL CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF VOLUNTEERING

The available evidence demonstrates that volunteering occupies an important place in Poland's social fabric. It strengthens interpersonal bonds, supports community resilience during crises, enhances the functioning of NGOs, and contributes to the development of civic competences among young people. At the same time, the landscape is characterised by high willingness to help coupled with lower levels of sustained, longterm participation - a pattern observed consistently across multiple data sources.

## Statistics and Demographics

### Volunteering rate of population



Statistics Poland does not publish the total number of volunteers in Poland; the survey reports participation rates only.

Estimated number based on participation rate: Using the overall rate of 28.4% among people aged 15–89, the estimated number of volunteers in this age group is approximately 9–9.4 million, based on demographic data for this population segment.

### Annual economic value of volunteering\*\*\*

Statistics Poland (GUS) does not publish annual level economic valuations of volunteering. The survey provides data only for the first quarter of 2022, based on a four week reference period and applicable to residents aged 15–89.

Available quarterly estimate:

In Q1 2022, the economic value of volunteer work - calculated using market wage equivalents - amounted to 6.0 billion PLN, corresponding to 0.9% of extended GDP and 1.0% of gross value added (GVA).

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

According to Statistics Poland (GUS), Volunteer Work in 2022, age is one of the strongest demographic determinants of volunteering in Poland. The data for the first quarter of 2022 indicate that volunteer engagement is highest among people in mid life, particularly those aged 45–54, where 33.6% of individuals reported undertaking voluntary work in the four weeks preceding the survey. This makes the 45–54 cohort the most active group across both individual and organisational forms of volunteering.

In 2022, gender plays a notable role in shaping volunteering patterns in Poland. Among people aged 15–89, women engaged in voluntary activities more frequently than men. In the first quarter of 2022, 29.9% of women reported undertaking voluntary work, compared with 26.8% of men, confirming a moderate but consistent gender gap in favour of women.

### Education Levels and Volunteering

According to Statistics Poland (GUS), Volunteer Work in 2022, educational attainment is one of the most significant correlates of volunteer engagement in Poland. The data show a clear and consistent gradient: the higher the level of education, the greater the likelihood of volunteering, both in individual and organisational forms. Individuals with tertiary (higher) education form the most active volunteer group in the country, whereas those with primary or incomplete education show the weakest engagement.

### Motivation for Volunteering

Insights into volunteering motivations in Poland come primarily from analytical syntheses developed for the National Institute of Freedom – Centre for Civil Society Development (NIW CRSO). These syntheses do not constitute original survey research; instead, they integrate findings from multiple independent primary sources, including regional volunteer studies, NGO sector analyses, academic assessments and national opinion surveys. Complementary behavioural insights are provided by CBOS public opinion studies, which examine declared motives, attitudes and cultural interpretations of helping behaviours. Statistics Poland (GUS) does not collect information on motivations, as the national volunteering survey focuses exclusively on the scale, structure and characteristics of volunteer work, not the reasons behind it.

### Types of Volunteer Activities

According to the Volunteer Work in 2022 study by Statistics Poland (GUS), volunteers in Poland engage in a broad range of activities that differ in scope and character depending on whether volunteering is performed informally (outside organisational structures) or formally (within organisations and institutions). These two forms coexist and together form the overall landscape of voluntary engagement.

\*Source: Statistics Poland (GUS), <https://plwiczbach.stat.gov.pl/PL/ludnosc.html>

\*\*Source: Eurostat / Statistics Poland (GUS) <https://stat.gov.pl/wskazniki-makroekonomiczne/>, Statistics Poland (GUS) <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/rynek-pracy/bezrobocie-rejestrowane/bezrobotni-zarejestrowani-i-stopnia-bezrobocia-stan-w-koncu-lutego-2026-r-,2163.html>

\*\*\*Source: Statistics Poland / GUS, Volunteer work in 2022.

## Impact of Volunteering

Volunteering generates a multidimensional impact in Poland, influencing social cohesion, economic value creation, organisational capacity and individual development. Evidence from national statistics, NGO sector research and analytical materials used in the diagnosis demonstrates that voluntary engagement contributes both to everyday social functioning and to broader systemic resilience.

## Measuring the Impact of Volunteering

Poland does not yet have a unified national framework for measuring the impact of volunteering. Existing tools are fragmented and used by different institutions.

The most systematic quantitative measurement is conducted by Statistics Poland (GUS), which captures the scale and economic value of volunteering through indicators such as volunteer hours, FTE equivalents and GDP valuation of unpaid work.

## Quality Standards in the Field of Volunteering

Poland does not have a national quality standard or unified framework for volunteer management, and practices vary significantly between sectors and institutions. The only legally defined elements are the formal requirements set out in the Public Benefit and Volunteer Work Act, which regulate agreements, insurance, reimbursement rules and basic responsibilities of host organisations. These provisions function as minimum formal safeguards, but they do not constitute a comprehensive quality standard for managing volunteers.

## Challenges to the Development of Volunteering

Evidence from diagnostic materials prepared for NIW CRSO and the Solidarity Corps national programme, complemented by national statistics, indicates that the development of volunteering in Poland is constrained by a combination of individual, organisational and systemic barriers. These constraints interact with one another, shaping both the scale and the character of voluntary engagement.

## National E-platform for Volunteering

Poland has a national e platform for volunteering in the form of System Obsługi Wolontariatu (SOW) – Volunteer Management System (VMS), developed within the Solidarity Corps (Korpus Solidarności). SOW/VMS operates as a nationwide digital tool designed to support volunteer coordination, registration and documentation, and represents the most structured technological component of Poland's volunteering infrastructure.

## Institutional and Legal Framework for Volunteering



The institutional and legal architecture of volunteering in Poland is grounded in the Act on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work (2003), which regulates the performance of voluntary services, the rights and obligations of volunteers, the principles of agreements, insurance coverage and the reimbursement of expenses. A central element of this framework is the system of statutory protection that ensures volunteers' safety and access to support during the performance of voluntary activities.

## Financial Support for the Development of Volunteering



The financial environment for volunteering in Poland operates across two interlinked layers: targeted funding dedicated specifically to volunteer engagement and the broader financial condition of NGOs, which determines their capacity to sustain volunteer programmes. According to recent ngo.pl analyses, (including Kondycja organizacji pozarządowych 2024 and Więcej pieniędzy, mniej stabilności), the NGO sector continues to experience low financial stability, with only about one third of organisations holding financial reserves and more than 70% reporting persistent difficulties in securing funds. This structural vulnerability directly affects their ability to maintain volunteer coordination, training and organisational support systems.



## Trends in the Development of Volunteering

Data from GUS, NIWCRSO, CBOS and Klon/Jawor point to several consistent trends shaping volunteering in Poland.

- The most prominent is the continued dominance and growth of informal volunteering, while participation in regular, structured volunteering declines. GUS confirms that informal interpersonal help remains the most widespread form of voluntary activity.
- Volunteering also shows strong crisis reactivity: engagement surged to 37.1% following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, illustrating rapid mobilisation during emergencies. NIW analyses note similar patterns during other crisis events.
- A further trend is the shift from longterm to short term, ad hoc volunteering, especially among young people. The Updated KS Diagnosis shows that Generation Z prioritises flexible, task-oriented engagement over sustained commitments.
- Digitalisation is reshaping the field, with e-volunteering and hybrid roles expanding, particularly in coordination, communication and remote support tasks.
- Motivational patterns are also evolving. While altruism remains important, CBOS and NIW studies highlight a growing focus on competence development, meaningful experiences and personal growth, especially among youth.

## National Award and Recognitions for Volunteering

Recognition of volunteers in Poland takes many forms that extend beyond formal competitions and operate across national, regional and local levels. Within this system, the most structured nationwide award framework is provided by the Korpus Solidarności, which organises the Volunteer of the Year Award and the Volunteer Coordinator of the Year Award.

## Key Stakeholders in the Development of Volunteering

The development of volunteering in Poland involves a diverse set of actors across civic, public and governmental spheres. According to the Solidarity Corps programme documentation and analyses prepared for NIW CRSO, non governmental organisations remain the core environment for structured volunteering and represent the best documented and most consistently supported segment of volunteer engagement in Poland, reflecting both the availability of research and the scale of programme level support for this sector.

## Research in the Field of Volunteering\*

Research on volunteering in Poland is produced by several independent institutions, each applying different definitions and methodologies. Statistics Poland (GUS) provides the most systematic measurement of voluntary work, capturing formal and informal volunteering within its labour-force survey module, but does not collect data on motivations or organisational practices.

The National Freedom Institute (NIW-CRSO) synthesises these diverse sources through programme evaluations and national analyses covering 2020–2025, integrating regional studies, sector reports and administrative datasets. NIW highlights significant gaps in existing knowledge, including limited data on volunteering in public institutions, inconsistent information about school-based volunteering and the absence of system-level, longitudinal measurement tools.