

General Information



KEY INFORMATION ABOUT ROMANIA

Capital: Bucharest
Official Language: Romanian
Population: 18.83 million*
Currency: Romanian Leu (RON)
Calling Code: +40

KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

GDP per capita: US\$ 382,564.22 million**
Real GDP growth: 0.9%***
Unemployment rate in February 2026: 6% ****

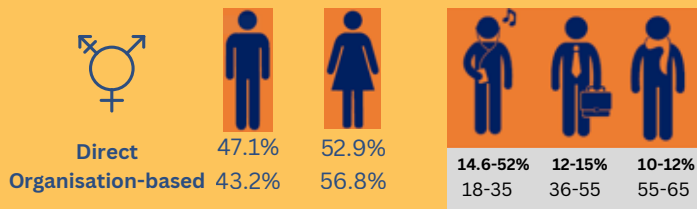
Statistics and Demographics

Volunteering rate of population*****



% 14-15

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



Total number of volunteers*****:

- Direct volunteers: 670,207
- Organisation-based volunteers: 622,335

Annual economic value of volunteering: 1.51% of the country's GDP*****

Over half of volunteers have completed high school. Additionally, 21.5% have obtained a university diploma, while 5.4% hold a postgraduate qualification. Around 14.4% are still students at various educational levels, and 4.2% have not graduated from high school.*****

DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEERING*****

Volunteering in Romania is considered to be any public interest activity carried out of free will by any individual or organisation for the benefits of others, without any financial benefit, within a formal or informal frame of work; moreover, volunteering is considered professional experience with the condition that the activities performed are realised within the field of the person's acquired studies.

SOCIAL CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering in Romania is an evolving sector, transitioning from informal aid to structured, service-oriented action that fills gaps in social welfare, particularly for the elderly and underprivileged groups. Although historically lower in engagement compared to Western Europe, it acts as a critical driver for community development, youth skill acquisition and social cohesion. Volunteering is usually service-oriented, meaning that it focuses more on providing essential services (social care, poverty relief) rather than "expressive" roles like political activism. Volunteering can be found in certain key sectors, such as social services for the elderly, disabled and poor, alongside education and, increasingly, religious organisations.

Motivation for Volunteering*****

While often driven by altruism, many young Romanians volunteer to gain professional experience, skills, and networking opportunities.

Types of Volunteer Activities*****

- **Environmental Conservation & Ecology:** Opportunities to protect Romania's natural landscapes (Carpathians, Danube Delta), including wildlife protection (bears, wolves) and habitat restoration through organisations like Foundation Conservation Carpathia.
 - **Rural Development & Eco-Farming**
 - **Animal Welfare**
- **Social & Childcare Support:** Volunteering in teaching (e.g. English), supporting children (including those with special needs), and organising activities, with organisations like Teach for Romania, while developing leadership and communication skills
 - **Community Outreach**
- **Cultural Heritage & Restoration:** Involvement in restoring historic buildings and preserving traditional crafts through organisations such as Pro Patrimonio Foundation and Transylvania Trust, contributing to safeguarding Romania's cultural heritage.

* Source: <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/romania-population/>
 ** Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=RO>
 *** Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=RO>
 **** Source: <https://tradingeconomics.com/romania/unemployment-rate>

*****Source: <https://knowledge.unv.org/country/romania>
 *****Source: <https://www.fdcsc.ro/en/graphics-of-the-romanian-ngo-sector/>
 *****Source: https://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/national_report_ro_en.pdf / <https://knowledge.unv.org/country/romania>
 *****Source: https://professional-volunteering.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ProVol_country_report_RO_2016.pdf

*****Source: https://professional-volunteering.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ProVol_country_report_RO_2016.pdf
 *****Source: <https://studisappyard.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/1-2022-3.pdf>
 *****Source: <https://romaniatourism.com/volunteering-opportunities-for-international-students-in-romania.html>

Impact of Volunteering*

Social & Community Impact: Volunteering serves as a crucial resource for NGOs in tackling poverty, environmental issues and aiding the elderly or disabled. It brings people together, bridging gaps between different social groups and fostering inclusivity.

Benefits for Volunteers: Participants experience higher life satisfaction, increased self-esteem, better physical/mental health, and a sense of pride.

Developmental Opportunities: Young volunteers gain new skills and valuable CV experience, enhancing their career prospects.

Organizational Support: Volunteers increase the operational capacity and credibility of non-profit organizations, providing a "breath of fresh air" and essential, cost-effective support.

Measuring the Impact of Volunteering*****

Youthpass Certificate (European Standard): Used extensively in Romania for European Solidarity Corps (ESC) and Erasmus+ projects to document learning outcomes and competence development.

Comprehensive Handbook on Volunteering Impact Assessment: Developed through Erasmus+ (including Romanian partners), this handbook is available in Romanian and provides a structured approach to assessing local and national impact.

Active Citizens Fund (IMPACT3): A major initiative (2024) aimed at building the capacity of over 80 Romanian CSOs in social impact assessment, utilizing specialized methodology for both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Quality Standards in the Field of Volunteering

Quality standards in the field of volunteering in Romania are primarily defined by Law no. 78/2014, which regulates volunteer activities, promotes professionalisation, and aligns Romanian practices with European standards. This framework mandates that volunteering be based on a written contract, voluntary consent, and non-remuneration, while ensuring the recognition of volunteering as work experience.

National E-platform for Volunteering

Voluntariat.ro: Developed with support from Linnify, this platform acts as a central hub for managing volunteer activities, providing, and ensuring access to legal resources for both volunteers and coordinators.

Pro Vobis - National Resource Center for Volunteering: Acts as a leading organisation in Romania focused on developing, promoting, and facilitating networking for volunteering stakeholders, including training and consultancy.



Financial Support for the Development of Volunteering*****

- European Solidarity Corps (ESC):** This is the main source of funding for volunteer projects in Romania, supporting long-term and short-term activities for young people aged 18–30. ESC projects cover accommodation, food, pocket money, insurance, and travel costs.
- Erasmus+:** Similar to ESC, this program supports volunteering as part of non-formal education and youth exchange.
- Civil Society Development Foundation (FDSC):** A major actor in supporting Romanian NGOs, aiming to obtain non-reimbursable funds worth at least 30 million euro by 2028.
- European Social Fund Plus (ESF+):** Romania is investing roughly 7.3 billion EUR from ESF+ to support social inclusion, employment and capacity building for NGOs. (<https://european-social-fund-plus.ec.europa.eu/en/support-your-country/esf-romania>)
- Community Foundations:** Organizations like the Romanian Federation of Community Foundations (FFCR) provide local funding opportunities.



Institutional and Legal Framework for Volunteering****

Institutional Framework

Responsibilities are divided among ministries depending on the sector, with the Ministry of Labour, Family, Youth and Social Solidarity covering aspects related to youth volunteering strategy.

- National Strategy: youth volunteering is included in the National Youth Strategy 2024-2027.

Legal Framework

Law no. 78/2014: Defines volunteering as an activity of public interest, non-obligatory, and unpaid, undertaken based on a written contract between a natural person and a host organisation.

Key Stakeholders in the Development of Volunteering*

Key Umbrella Organisations and Resource Centres: VOLUM Federation (Federatia Organizatiilor care Sprijina Dezvoltarea Voluntariatului in Romania): The primary national umbrella body for volunteer centres and volunteer-involving organisations, established in 2010 to act as a leading actor in promoting volunteering infrastructure.

Public and Governmental Institutions: Ministry of Education and Youth/County Departments for Sport and Youth: These entities implement national policies and strategies for volunteering.

Corporate Sector (Corporate Social Responsibility): Private Companies: Companies engaging in CSR projects are growing stakeholders, encouraging employee volunteering, though participation rates for such companies remain quite low.

Other influencers and Facilitators: International Bodies: The European Commission is a major stakeholder, providing frameworks and promoting volunteer activities through initiatives like the European Year of Volunteering.

National Awards and Recognitions for Volunteering**

- The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Romania (DoE): A prestigious program where young people earn awards (Bronze, Silver, Gold) through community volunteering. It involves volunteering, skill development, physical activity, and adventures.
- Romanian Youth Gala is an event which recognizes the merits of young people involved in volunteering through projects and social and civic initiatives.
- National Volunteer Week (Săptămâna Națională a Voluntariatului - SNV): Coordinated by Pro Vobis – National Volunteer Resource Center, this week-long event celebrates and promotes volunteering nationwide, often featuring local awards and recognition ceremonies.
- Sports Volunteers (Voluntari in Sport): A specialized program focusing on training and recognizing volunteers involved in sports events across Romania.
- European Solidarity Corps (ESC) Participation Awards: These awards recognize young individuals, including those in Romania, who have participated in ESC projects, supported by the European Commission.
- NGO-Specific Awards: Various Romanian NGOs, such as the Romanian United Foundation, celebrate volunteers through annual galas and community appreciation initiatives.

Challenges to the Development of Volunteering***

1. Cultural and Historical Context

- Legacy of Communist 'Volunteering': Mandatory "patriotic work" during the communist era left a legacy of resentment, causing many to view volunteering negatively in the 1990s and early 2000s.
- Low Public Trust: There is a general post-communist lack of trust in public institutions and organisations, which hampers community mobilisation.
- Lack of Culture of Volunteering: Volunteering is still evolving from a concept of individual "good deeds" to a professionalized, well-organised activity.

2. Legal and Structural Barriers

- Low Awareness of Volunteering Law: Research indicates that roughly two-thirds of people (64% to 74%) are either unaware of the existing volunteering law (Law 78/2014) or desire a clearer legislative framework.
- Narrow Legal Definition: The law tends to focus on formal, written contracts with organizations, failing to adequately recognise the widespread informal volunteering that takes place outside this framework.
- Weak Organizational Capacity: Many NGOs in Romania struggle to manage volunteers efficiently, lacking the capacity to train, retain, or properly assign roles to volunteers, leading to a high turnover.

3. Economic and Resource Constraints

- Funding and Administrative Barriers: Non-profits rely heavily on European funds, which are challenging to access due to high co-funding requirements and slow reimbursement rates, leading to cash flow problems.
- Lack of State Support Schemes: The state provides limited support to NGOs in accessing these funds or in supporting volunteer infrastructure.
- Out-of-pocket Expenses: High costs for transportation or materials can act as a deterrent for potential volunteers.

4. Individual and Demographic Barriers

- Time Management and Motivation: Volunteers often juggle volunteering with other life responsibilities, leading to challenges with consistent engagement.
- Lack of Information: A major barrier is the lack of information regarding available volunteering opportunities in the community.
- Specific Challenges for Youth/Older Persons: Young people cite a lack of recognition for their skills, while older persons often cite poor health or lack of information about available opportunities.

5. Regional and Sectoral Disparities

- Urban-Rural Divide: Volunteering activities are largely concentrated in urban areas, leaving rural areas with fewer opportunities and lower participation rates.
- Limited Public Sector Volunteering: Volunteering is heavily restricted to the NGO sector, with very low participation in public non-profit.

Corporate Volunteering and Professional Management

- Upward Trend in Corporate Volunteering: CSR initiatives are increasing, with companies encouraging employee involvement to boost community engagement and team building.
- Infrastructure Development: There is a growing network of volunteering centres and professionalized volunteer management systems (e.g., National Volunteer Week, National Volunteer Gala).
- Formalisation: Volunteering is now legally recognised and regulated, with the 2014 volunteer law providing a framework for participation in both public and private non-profit entities.

Geographical and Demographic Disparities

- Urban vs. Rural Gaps: Volunteering is more concentrated in developed urban areas (Bucharest, Transylvania, Banat). People in rural areas and poorer regions (South Muntania, South-East) are less likely to volunteer, often due to lack of information or organised opportunities.
- Low Engagement Among Older Persons: While young people are highly active, volunteering among people over 65 is very low (roughly 4.6%), often hindered by poor health, lack of information, or heavy family caring responsibilities, such as looking after grandchildren.

Key Motivations

- Desire For Community Impact: A strong motivation for Romanian volunteers is the desire to solve community problems and help those in need, rather than just gaining experience.
- Values-Driven: Volunteers often report increased self-confidence, a sense of fulfillment, and professional development as major personal benefits.

Research in the Field of Volunteering*****

- Volunteer Profile:** Primarily young (19-25), with high school or university education, often students, with a slightly higher female participation rate.
- Barriers & Motivations:** Low engagement among older adults (only 4.6% in a recent study) is attributed to lack of awareness, low income, and cultural factors. Conversely, young people are motivated by skill acquisition and career development.
- Regional Disparities:** Volunteering is concentrated in more developed areas, such as Bucharest and Transylvania, while southern regions report lower activity.
- Role in Society:** Volunteering in Romania is frequently aimed at solving social problems (service role) rather than just self-expression, with increasing involvement in NGOs and European programs like the European Solidarity Corps.

* Source: https://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/national_report_ro_en.pdf
**Source: <https://doe.ro/en/>, <https://municii.gov.ro/gala-sineritului-din-romania/>, <https://saptamanavoluntariatului.ro/>, <https://www.voluntarisport.ro/>, https://youth.europa.eu/news/participation-awards-your-chance-shine_en, <https://www.romanianunitedfund.org/>
***Source: <https://umbuc.ro/ro/activitati-din-bucuresti-erectate-cu-spiritu-le-activitate-romilor-fata-de-voluntariat/?lang=en>, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/32970378_Volunteering_Advantages_and_Difficulties_in_Romania, https://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/national_report_ro_en.pdf
****Source: <https://national-policies.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/romania/13-national-youth-strategy/> <https://vantou.ro/en/diverse/en/new-law-volunteering/>

*****Source: <https://oportunitati.gov.ro/en/program/programul-corpul-european-de-solidaritate/>, <https://www.fdsc.ro/en/30-years-of-the-civil-society-development-foundation-csdf/>, <https://european-social-fund-plus.ec.europa.eu/en/support-your-country/esf-romania>
*****Source: <https://youth.europa.eu/ro/comprehensive-handbook-on-volunteering-impact-assessment-a-guide-for-ngos-and-project-managers/>, <https://activecitizensfund.ro/en/impacts/#:~:text=The%20methodological%20approach%20to%20programme%20combines%20benefit%20to%20tailored%20coaching%20and%20monitoring.>
*****Source: <https://www.linnify.com/products/voluntariat/> <https://lavenderbush-lion-243029.hostinger.site.com/>
*****Source: https://youth.europa.eu/go/abroad/volunteering/ro/in-the-country_en, <https://researchandeducation.ro/2023/07/31/participation-in-volunteer-and-lifelong-learning-activities-among-older-persons-in-romania.html>, https://www.uabisi.ro/newagros/PDF/2010_2_272.pdf#:~:text=In%20recent%20years%20the%20share%20of%20new%20a,figures%20as%20volunteers%2C%20especially%20from%20the%20media., <https://studiiapsyead.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/1-2022-3.pdf>