

General Information



KEY INFORMATION ABOUT THE NETHERLANDS

Capital: Amsterdam

Official Language: Dutch

Population: 17.9 million

Currency: Euro (EUR)

Calling Code: +31

KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

GDP per capita: € 53,200

Real GDP growth in 2022: 3,5%

Unemployment rate in February 2024: 3,70%

DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEERING***

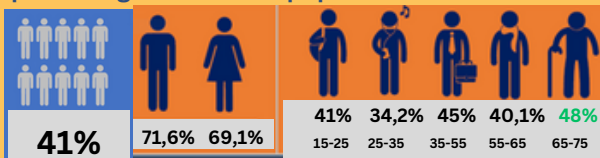
Work performed in any organized context, unobligated and unpaid, for the benefit of others or society

SOCIAL CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers as active citizens contribute to social connection in neighborhoods, districts, villages and cities. When people volunteer for others and for society, social innovation and entrepreneurship emerge. Volunteers are rightly called "the cement" of society. If they all suddenly stopped doing it, the Netherlands would become quite disrupted. In the Netherlands, 41% of all residents aged 15 years and older are voluntarily active in one form or another.

Statistics and Demographics*

Volunteer experience at least once in a lifetime (percentage of the total population)



On average, volunteers spent 4.4 hours per week volunteering in 2022.



The average volunteer in The Netherlands, a person who has been involved in volunteering at least once in their life, is equally likely to be male or female, of elder age (65-75 years, 48%) and with pdh, master or degree (54,2%).

People with a high level of education (completed HBO, WO bachelor's and WO, master's, doctorate) are more likely to be volunteers than people with a lower education level. While half of the highly educated are active as volunteers, this is just over a quarter of the least educated. Higher educated people are more likely than lower educated people to work for a school, a sports club, cultural association, labor or political organizations, nature conservation, refugee work and for the neighborhood. People with lower levels of education spend on average more hours per week on volunteer work than people with higher levels of education. In 2022, more people with a completed pre-vocational secondary education did volunteer work than in 2021. The percentage of volunteers within the other education levels has not changed significantly.**

Motivation for Volunteering

There are two motives that stand out: liking to volunteer (58 percent) and liking to do something for someone else (57 percent). For 37 percent the motivation lies in a meaningful use of time, for 32 percent the motive is social contacts and 28 percent do it out of a sense of duty. Learning new things is indicated by 17 percent as a motive, and a limited 4 percent see volunteering as a stepping stone to a paid job. 13 percent indicate some other reason.

Types of Volunteer Activities****

	2022
Sports club	13.4
School	7.4
Neighbourhood	7.1
Care or health care	6.8
Philosophical organization	6.4
Hobby or social club	6.4
Cultural association	5.2
Youth or community center work	4.4
Social assistance	3.4
Environment, nature or animal protection	3.5
Refugee work, human rights	2.7
Labor or political organization	1.8
Different organization	8.9

* Source Central Bureau of Statistics: <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2023/39/more-volunteers-in-2022-but-still-below-pre-covid-levels>

**Source: Free University in Amsterdam 'Giving in the Netherlands'; philanthropy and volunteering: <https://osf.io/kqa8j>

***Source: Ministry of Health Welfare and Sports 1980

****<https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/longread/rapportages/2023/vrijwilligerswerk-2022/2-reguliere-deel-van-het-onderzoek>

Impact of Volunteering

Impact in society:

- Innovative solutions with impact on social issues;
- A powerful "civil society" that acts as the cement of society.
- Resilient society in times of disaster or crisis
- Well-being, meaning and self-reliance of individual citizens who volunteer and thereby also develop new skills, increase their networks and opportunities for paid work;
- Calling attention to abuses or excluded groups in society
- Uniting: encouraging people to participate in society and bringing together people who may be living alongside each other;
- Strengthening dialogue on social issues.

Regarding **personal impact**, Harvard Medical School study, *Volunteering helps combat the effects of stress and anxiety*, provides social contacts that have a positive effect on well-being and reduces the risk of depression. It makes people happier. It also boosts self-confidence, which in turn affects people's outlook on life. Volunteering gives meaning and direction to life and to stay physically healthy. In fact, volunteers have a lower mortality rate than non-volunteers'

Quality Standards in the Field of Volunteering***

The **NOV Quality Mark for Voluntary Deployment Well Arranged**, often shortened to just "NOV Quality Mark," is a certification system developed by the Netherlands Organization for Voluntary Deployment (NOV). This quality mark is designed to ensure that organizations involved in voluntary work and deployment have their affairs in order and meet certain standards.

It's part of the efforts to ensure high standards in the voluntary sector, benefiting both the organizations and the communities they serve

Challenges to the Development of Volunteering in the Netherlands

- Regulatory burden of laws and regulations from the EU, national government and the municipality
- Derisking; long procedures in opening a bank account and controlling all expenses. Specifically for small NGOs working abroad
- Finding new board members.
- Recruit more and a more inclusive group of volunteers.

Measuring the Impact of Volunteering

No data available for the moment



Institutional and Legal Framework for Volunteering in the Netherlands*

Government policies on volunteers are laid down in regulations of insurance, tax-free compensation, being unemployed and volunteering, civic integration and volunteering, among others. Subsidy for organizations and research on volunteering. In 2023, the government has indicated its intention to develop a vision for volunteerism.

Municipalities implement volunteer work policies based on their own choices. There is no framework for this. On behalf of NOV, research has been done on this: <https://vrijwilligerswerk.nl/documenten+algemeen/handlerdownloadfiles.ashx?idnv=2094312>



Financial Support for the Development of Volunteering in the Netherlands

Since 2017, the government has been encouraging talent development of young people in doing volunteer work under the title: Social Service Time. A large program with a budget of 200 million by 2023 (The Ministry of Health Welfare and Sports subsidizes the National Association for Volunteering; NOV)

TAX Benefits

Tax-free expense allowance for volunteers of up to 1,900 euros per year. 95% of volunteer organizations reimburse expenses actually incurred and only 5% of volunteer organizations can offer the maximum reimbursement.

NOV organizes the **annual National Volunteer Awards event**. With contributions from the Ministry of Public Health Welfare and Sport and the Postcode Lottery. Several municipalities have their local awards and ratings for volunteer work.

National E-platform for Volunteering



NOV does provide a national volunteer database called "VrijwilligersVacatureBank" (Volunteer Vacancy Bank). This database serves as a platform for connecting volunteers with organizations looking for volunteers.

Trends in the Development of Volunteering in the Netherlands

- Gradual decline in numbers of volunteers and hours of commitment per volunteer
- Shift from long-term commitment to also temporary and flexible commitment.
- Increasing competition in (leisure) time use: work, care for loved ones, study etc.
- Increased demand on the commitment of volunteers in care, welfare, library, at parents' school, debt relief, nature maintenance, etc. Often due to government cuts in public services and shortages on the labor market of paid workers.

Key Stakeholders in the Development of Volunteering

No data available for the moment.

Research in the Field of Volunteering****

Study by the Free University in Amsterdam: *The "Geven in Nederland" report "Maatschappelijke Betrokkenheid in Kaart Gebracht 2022"*. It is a comprehensive study on philanthropy and volunteering in the Netherlands. It examines the behavior of individuals and organizations in terms of donating money, time, and other resources to charitable and social causes.

* Source: <https://vrijwilligerswerk.nl/documenten+algemeen/handlerdownloadfiles.ashx?idnv=2094312>

** <https://www.nov.nl/koers+mee/lidorganisatiestxt/default.aspx> Including 160 local Volunteer Centers

*** <https://vrijwilligerswerk.nl/keurmerk-aanvragen>

**** <https://osf.io/kga8j>