

FACT SHEET ON VOLUNTEERING IN HUNGARY

May 2024

General Information



KEY INFORMATION ABOUT HUNGARY

Capital: Budapest
Official Language: Hungarian
Population: 9,599,744 (as of 2023)*
Currency: HUF (forint)
Calling Code: +36

KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

GDP per capita: 6,8 mio. HUF/27,000 euro (as of 2022)*
Real GDP growth in 2022: 4.6%*
Unemployment rate in September 2023: 4.6%

Statistics and Demographics****

A total of 2 277 630 people volunteered; 31,08 % of 15-74 year olds citizens



Total hours (annual): 58 M hours

Average hours per volunteers: 143 – 145 hours

The average volunteer in Hungary is predominantly female (57.2%), either younger (18-29) or older (27.4%) with higher or upper secondary education and employed (1,497,097) living in a city (34.4%)

Motivation for Volunteering****

Regarding the motivational reasons and factors for volunteering, volunteers mostly agree with the statements: Volunteers were motivated mainly by the joy of helping others, with the general belief that helping children, the elderly, the seriously ill is a moral duty. In addition to traditional volunteering, there has been a shift, particularly among young people, towards a new type of volunteering, focusing on skills, practical experience, networking and similar social values typical of the knowledge-based, information society. Motivation of volunteers in 2022 (2 277 630 volunteers): • The importance of helping others: 95,59 % • The importance of feeling better and/or more important personally 71,55% • The importance of serving a social cause, a social group 69,16% • The importance to gaining knowledge 53,63% • The importance of skills development 34,81%

DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEERING

There is no uniform definition of volunteering, neither in the law as glossary of terms, nor in the literature nor in the researches available. Professionally, the volunteering types are: **formal** – making activities of public interest at organisations (short term actions or long term programmes) and **informal** – taking self-initiated or group activities benefiting others, excluding relatives.

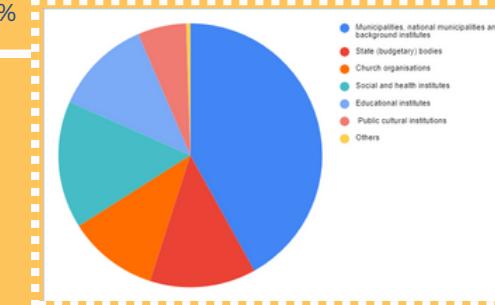
SOCIAL CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF VOLUNTEERING** (***)

Volunteering has grown significantly since the regime change, with non-profit organizations playing a key role in formalizing volunteer engagement. Local community support has been crucial, but volunteering remains sporadic and informal overall. Recent data shows a growing trend in volunteering, with individuals participating regularly, occasionally, or on a one-time basis, driven by various motivations. While most volunteers contribute informally, formal volunteering is not yet widespread in Hungary.

Types of Volunteer Activities****

Traditional volunteering is mainly active in the social fields (distribution of donations, donations, food and clothing, other assistance programmes). Their primary motivation a set of values linked to the activity, in some cases religious motivation, the need to help others (mostly the needy, possibly also the helping others (people in need, through naturalisation), humanitarian involvement humanitarianism. The modern volunteering focuses on skills development, gaining practical experience, seeking challenges and expanding the network of contacts, turning to the values of a knowledge-based, information society, and quality leisure time. A third type is a mixture of the two, with those involved altruistic, community-oriented and self-fulfilling, experience-seeking attitudes.

Number volunteers in the different fields at CSOs (formal volunteering) • Culture and free-time: 169 599 people • Education and research: 41 635 people • Healthcare and social services: 93 206 people • Environmental protection: 18 874 people • Charity: 6 530 people • Church life: 13 512 people • Other: 59 916 people. The most popular informal volunteering places are • house work: 53,3% • administrative work, shopping: 50,56 % • childcare: 20,32 % • nursing, elderly care: 11,07 %



Register of host organisations for voluntary activities in the public interest

Impact

Volunteering gives purpose and results to an individual's activities and is an important contribution to the functioning of society. Its effects on the individual include: satisfying physiological and cognitive needs, fostering a sense of belonging and esteem; providing a positive identity; helping to identify and develop skills; expanding personal and professional networks; and gaining new experiences. It has a constructive effect on society, active citizenship helps to strengthen society. Local communities become more cohesive and socially responsive; they care for their members. Voluntary activities take over many tasks from the state.

Measuring the Impact of Volunteering

Economic impact: 2019 - the estimated value of formal (direct) voluntary activities HUF 454.8 billion through organisations: HUF 39.7 billion total HUF 494.5 billion. 2022 - Reaching HUF 698.3 billion*



Institutional and Legal Framework for Volunteering in Hungary**

In Hungary, the Act LXXXVIII of 2005 on Volunteering in the Public Interest regulates the reception of volunteers in an organised framework. The Act defines the scope, rights and obligations of host organisations, the legal relationship between volunteers and the rules for registering volunteers.



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

There are no specifically programmes for supporting volunteering. NGOs working with volunteers can apply to the NEA (National Cooperation Fund). Participatory budgeting, which is a way of promoting volunteering, is also becoming more and more common in Hungary. It is practised by Budapest Capital, 9 districts of Budapest and larger cities across the country. Sporadically, municipalities may also have programmes to support volunteering in local affairs.

TAX Benefits

Benefits provided by organisations to volunteers are not considered benefits in kind, i.e. no tax or social security contributions are payable on such benefits (Section 7 (1) y) of the Personal Income Tax Act).

Quality Standards in Volunteering

There is no single standard system in the country, with different voluntary organisations operating their own quality assurance systems.



A National online database of volunteering opportunities exists in Hungary but it is missing updated information. In addition, volunteers can find actual offers and needs on local sites and thematic issues of NGOs.

Challenges to the Development of Volunteering in Hungary

Training possibilities for both host organisations and volunteers is important for effective and growing volunteering. This would require methodological centres in each region. The visibility and publicity currently receive little attention from CSOs. To make informal and formal volunteering visible and to promote it, regular communication activities needed which use a variety of communication channels and tools. In the case of volunteering-based activities, creating stability of funding can help to embed volunteer coordinators in the field and engage volunteers for long term.

Trends in the Development of Volunteering in Hungary

- Volunteers' motivation is moving from "helping to learning, to experience"
- Increasing volunteering in grassroots communities
- Fewer people are committing to an organisation for the long term
- Increasing proportion of knowledge and intellectual volunteering in addition to physical assistance



The Voluntarius Award

The Ministry of Human Resources established the Pro Voluntarius Award in 2013. Criteria: volunteering, educating young generations to volunteer, promoting the CSOs and the culture of giving. The prize is open to natural persons, municipalities, churches, CSOs and public institutions. At the local level, the municipalities award the Volunteer of the Year prize to those who volunteer actively in local initiatives and causes in their municipality. Every year since 2009, the Volunteering Hungary has awarded the Volunteer of the Year Award in several categories (volunteer, volunteer programme, community initiative, corporate volunteering).

Research in the Field of Volunteering****

Every 5 years there is research about volunteering financed by the state and made by a nonprofit organisation. The latest report (Volunteering in Hungary 2018) contains data from 2018 and published in 2020. The newest data collection was made in 2023 but the analysis is in progress. The up-to-date research report will be published in the next few months.

*https://real.mtak.hu/134671/1/VARADI %C3%96S2_2021_04_3_38.pdf https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/mef-kieg/mef_22.xlsx

**https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszbaly?docid=a0500088_tv

***https://onkentes.gov.hu/dijak/pro.voluntarius_dij.html

****<https://kot.gov.hu/kot/kozerdeku.onkentesseg/index.html>

**** Source: Volunteering in Hungary 2018 – Századvég Kiadó, Budapest, 2020 <https://budapestcivil.hu/article/nkentesseg-magyarorszagon-2018-szazadveg.pdf>