

General Information



KEY INFORMATION ABOUT THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND

Capital: Helsinki
Official Language: Finnish, Swedish
Population: 5.63 million (Statistics Finland)
Currency: Euro (EUR)
Calling Code: +358

KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS (IMF)

GDP per capita: US\$ 56,084 in 2025
Real GDP growth: 0.5%
Unemployment rate: 10.6%*

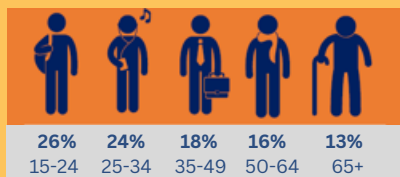
Statistics and Demographics

Volunteering rate of population**



43%

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



43% of Finns participated in volunteering during the past year, and women volunteer more often than men. (2024)

Total number of volunteers: 1,736,800 (15-79 years old population)**

Annual economic value of volunteering: € 3.2 billion**

Education Levels and Volunteering

The most committed segment of volunteers has completed high school, but differences between groups are very small. Stay at home mom's and dad's are for example highly involved in volunteer work

DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEERING**

Volunteering is activity that people do freely and without pay from their own free will to benefit another person, community, or the common good. It can be carried out using one's own skills or knowledge, and anyone can take part regardless of personal background. It does not replace paid work, but adds value and supports others or society.

SOCIAL CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF VOLUNTEERING**

Volunteering strengthens community trust, social capital, and societal well-being. It increases participation, reduces loneliness and social exclusion, and supports the functioning of communities across Finland. This demonstrates that volunteering is an integral part of Finnish society, especially as welfare resources face challenges, and plays a critical role in social cohesion and community resilience.

Motivation for Volunteering****

- **Meaning and purpose:** Volunteers want to contribute to society and feel their actions matter.
- **Helping others:** Many are motivated by making a difference and supporting those in need.
- **Social connection & well-being:** Volunteering strengthens social ties and emotional well-being.
- **Personal growth:** Offers skill development, learning opportunities, and confidence-building.

Types of Volunteer Activities

Volunteering with the elderly/seniors was the most common area in 2024.

- Activities involving children – supporting young people and children.
- Resident, neighbourhood or village activities – local community engagement.
- Sports and physical activity – voluntary involvement in sports and recreation.
- Volunteering with youth (young people).
- Culture and arts – cultural volunteer work.
- Political activity (less common).
- Health promotion and nature/environment/animal protection (among other fields).

The study's (Volunteer Work in Finland Research, 2024) top five sectors in which people reported doing volunteer work in the last year are: elders / seniors, children, local community, sports and youth.

* Source: Statistics Finland

** Source: Volunteer Work in Finland-research, Citizen Forum, 2024 / Citizen Forum / Jukka Hoffrén, University of Helsinki

*** Source: Volunteer Work in Finland -research 2024

****Source: Vapaaehtoistyö.fi volunteer survey 2024

Impact of Volunteering*

- Improved well-being: Volunteering positively affects life satisfaction and happiness.
- Reduced loneliness and sense of belonging: Strengthens community ties and inclusion.
- Skill & career development: Volunteers gain skills, networks, and sometimes employment opportunities.
- Professional opportunities: Volunteer work can lead to new projects or job openings

Measuring the Impact of Volunteering****

Finland measures volunteering at population level through official time-use and household surveys, following ILO international standards.

What is measured:

- Participation rates (formal; informal volunteering)
- Frequency and time spent
- Demographic patterns (age, gender, region)
- Changes over time (longitudinal trends)

National E-platform for Volunteering



Quality Standards in the Field of Volunteering

Although Finland has no separate Volunteering Act, volunteering quality is framed through:

- equality and non-discrimination legislation
- occupational safety principles (adapted to volunteering)
- data protection (GDPR)
- child protection and safeguarding rules

Authorities emphasise that:

- volunteering must be voluntary, safe, non-exploitative
- volunteers must not replace paid labour
- organisers have a duty of care toward volunteers

These principles are explained in national guidance for organisers on Suomi.fi, used as the standard reference by municipalities and NGOs.

Institutional and Legal Framework for Volunteering



In Finland, voluntary activities are not governed by a single law of their own, but are covered by several general laws. The basic principle of the legislation is that voluntary activities are voluntary, uncompensated, and for the public good, and they must not replace paid work.**

Key Stakeholders in the Development of Volunteering

- Ministry of Justice, Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy (KANE), Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (STM) – volunteering in welfare, health, and social inclusion
- Ministry of Education and Culture (OKM) – youth work, sports, culture, and civic education
- Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (TEM) – volunteering and employment policy links

These ministries fund, regulate, or cooperate with volunteer-based organisations in their respective sectors.***

Citizen Forum as an umbrella organisation for all volunteer work organizations

National Award and Recognitions for Volunteering**



Kansalaisareena (Citizen Forum) has awarded the Volunteer of the Year for 10 consecutive years, recognising individuals who have made significant voluntary contributions in Finland. The award is presented on Volunteers' Day (December 5) to raise appreciation and visibility of voluntary activities and highlight inspiring volunteers. Winners often serve as ambassadors for volunteering and are celebrated at events connected to international Volunteers' Day.

Financial Support for the Development of Volunteering



The system is mixed: public funding by Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is central, complemented by EU programmes, municipal support, foundations, and private donations.

Challenges to the Development of Volunteering

Cuts to funding by the state (fewer employees and time to development work, less possibilities to develop new forms of volunteering)

Trends in the Development of Volunteering

Short term volunteer tasks, commitment more to the theme than to organisation. (People want to participate in volunteer work, but in several different organisations and by doing short-term tasks)

Research in the Field of Volunteering

Research on volunteering in Finland can be grouped into five main strands:

- National statistical monitoring,
- Repeated population surveys,
- Academic research,
- Policy-oriented and sectoral studies, and
- applied and developmental research by NGOs.

* Source: Vapaaehtoistyö.fi volunteer survey 2024

**Source: Citizen Forum

***Source: ec.europa.eu

****Source: Statistics Finland