



**SCOUTS**<sup>®</sup>  
Creating a Better World

# New Ways of Volunteering

Research outcomes

**European Scout Region, 2023**



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# Introduction

## Aims



'*New Ways of Volunteering*' is an international team of volunteers from the European Scout Region set up to:

- Research what the flexible ways of volunteering are
- Research and engage Member Organizations (MOs) to review their volunteering offer, become more flexible and attractive to become reflective of their communities
- Engage MOs to share new ways of volunteering across the European Region
- *The team is part of the operational framework implementing the Regional Scout Plan 2022-2025 "Strong, Innovative, Green".*

# Introduction

## Research Questions

Research questions	Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the common, 'classic' systems, models of volunteering?</li> <li>• What are the new emerging concepts, trends, people needs because of changing reality, COVID-19, any future trends, e.g.:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• digitalization</li> <li>• motivation</li> <li>• mobility</li> <li>• communities</li> <li>• micro-volunteering, individualization (episodic, noncommittal)</li> <li>• spontaneous volunteering during disasters (pandemics, war, earthquakes, etc)</li> <li>• 'third-party' volunteering (corporate volunteering, service learning, community service)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Literature review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are other NGOs, international org. doing in innovating volunteering?</li> <li>• How do policy-makers, other governance and management authorities perceive these trends?</li> <li>• Which of the trends are the most relevant?</li> <li>• What are the responses in action / planned?</li> </ul>	Interviews with other international organizations, governance and managing authorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are these trends in volunteering trends reflected in European MOs?</li> <li>• What are the barriers in leveraging these trends? What types of barriers, for example, structural?</li> <li>• What opportunities are there to unlock?</li> </ul>	Workshops with Scouting MOs



# **Volunteering models**

# Models of volunteering

**One-off  
volunteering**

*Low identification  
Short term*

**Project based  
volunteering**

*High/Low identification  
Short/Long term*

**Task based  
volunteering**

*High/Low identification  
Short/Long term*

**Micro-volunteering**

*Low identification  
Short/Long term*

**Seasonal and  
event based  
volunteering**

*High/Low identification  
Short/Long term*

**Role based  
volunteering**

*High identification  
Long term*

# Models of volunteering: Long-term

## Role based volunteering

- **Description:** role based volunteering with a regular commitment, usually once a week or more, over an extended period (e.g. membership based organisations), may involve training.
- **Examples:** volunteering at a hospital, serving as a volunteer firefighter, or supporting a youth mentoring program.

## Task based volunteering

- **Description:** completing a specific task (could be re-occurring) more significant commitment of time, often requires specific skills or expertise. Unlike micro-volunteering, requires a more significant time commitment and may involve training or orientation
- **Examples:** tutoring, mentoring, event planning, website design, or serving on a board or committee, student volunteering programmes

# Models of volunteering: long-term

## Project volunteering

- **Description:** Time-limited volunteering to solve tasks within an enclosed thematic project. More commitment to a specific project rather than an organization. Will stay loyal to the project without necessarily identifying with the entire organization. Duration: a few months to several years.
- **Examples:** planning and running a series of thematic events,

## Seasonal & event based volunteering

- **Description:** occurs during a particular time of year or season, e.g. around holidays, special events. May involve supporting organizations that have a specific need during a particular time of year.
- **Examples:** collecting donations for a holiday food drive or wrapping gifts for a toy drive, helping out at events or festivals (e.g. corporate CSR programmes, high school students who are required to volunteer to graduate)

# Models of volunteering: short-term

## One-off volunteering

- **Description:** One-time commitment to a specific event or activity.
- **Examples:** volunteering at a charity walk, helping out at a community festival, participating in a one-day service project, crisis response

## Micro volunteering

- **Description:** short, simple and flexible activities, completed in a short period of time (e.g. less than an hour). Great for people with limited time or availability but still want to contribute
- **Examples:** filling out a survey, signing a petition, sharing a social media post, making a small donation, crisis response



# **Volunteering trends**

# Digital volunteering 1

- There is not **one definition**, form or profile for 'digital volunteering' or 'digital volunteer'.
- Digital volunteering – only for already **digitally skilled (tech-savvy)**, otherwise – gatekeeper, digital **divide**.
- Ways of engagement:
  - Digital **platforms** used to engage dig. volunteers, e.g. seasonal, between events, especially younger ones
  - Creating social **communities**, newsletters or meetups
- Matching volunteers with tasks requires knowledge of particular volunteer skills:
  - Tasks **short** and interesting, to encourage people to return again

# Digital volunteering 2

- Examples of tasks:
  - psycho-social support (chat rooms, community support, phone lines)
  - communication, design, translation
  - developing e-learning modules
  - pro-bono services by consultants, developers
  - data and digital services, mapping, GIS
  - research tasks, desk-reviews, report writing
- Reach: allows **localization** and provision of **real-time** services.
- Challenging to measure the **impact**.
- Volunteer motivation: twofold – can be enhanced due to **flexibility**, meaningful tasks or hindered by **isolation**, being online.

# 'Third-party' volunteering

- Certain programmes, incentives, institutionalization can be used to encourage individuals to volunteer, for example:
  - **Corporate programmes** (e.g. corporate social responsibility – CSR) – employees are either individually encouraged to volunteer by offering time off or special volunteering days are organized by supporting partner organizations
  - **University programmes** – students can either be required by curriculum to volunteer to acquire credits for their respective study programmes or are highly encouraged to sign up to optional university volunteering programmes
  - **High schools** – high school students may need to 'collect' volunteering hours to fulfill graduation requirements
- These third-party models tend to offer longer commitments, often seasonal or event based voluntary models are supported.
- Can impose pressure to volunteer (ranging to obligation).
- Once the programme finish, volunteers end their collaboration.

# Crisis-response volunteering

- This form of short-term volunteering **has grown dramatically both in scale and modality** in the past years.
  - Growth mostly due to:
    - advances in information and communication technologies
    - growing expectations of civic engagement
    - growing involvement of the private sector
- Less need for an intermediary – an organization (e.g self-organized applauds for healthcare workers during COVID-19).
- Examples of crisis-response volunteering include European refugee Crisis, floods episodes in England, emergency response following terrorist attacks, massive public clean-up etc.
- Due to the more "improvised" nature of this sort of volunteering, volunteers may have a gap of knowledge in understanding the event and there might be challenges on how to effectively coordinate efforts.

# Crisis-response volunteering

- Spontaneous volunteering tends to also be associated with extra costs, increased uncertainties, and additional chaos that could burden formal organizational practices. Spontaneous volunteering often becomes the **“surprise” element or the “out-of-control” factor** that formal organizations have to deal in addition to their work\*. In disaster response, there are even bigger concerns.
- Crisis-response volunteering might be a way for people to alleviate negative feelings related to the crisis and for building the resilience of communities ("self-helping").

# Topical issues

- Increased awareness of social, environmental concerns – especially for young adult volunteers.
- e.g. climate change, SDGs, animal rights.
- Need an association to leverage pre-conceived knowledge and idea, as well as provide capacity building and develop that knowledge.
- Effect: Increased awareness of community and being seen and heard in the group - the association becomes part of the identity.
- Effect: Volunteers change more often between organizations. They come in for a project, and when the project ends move to the next.

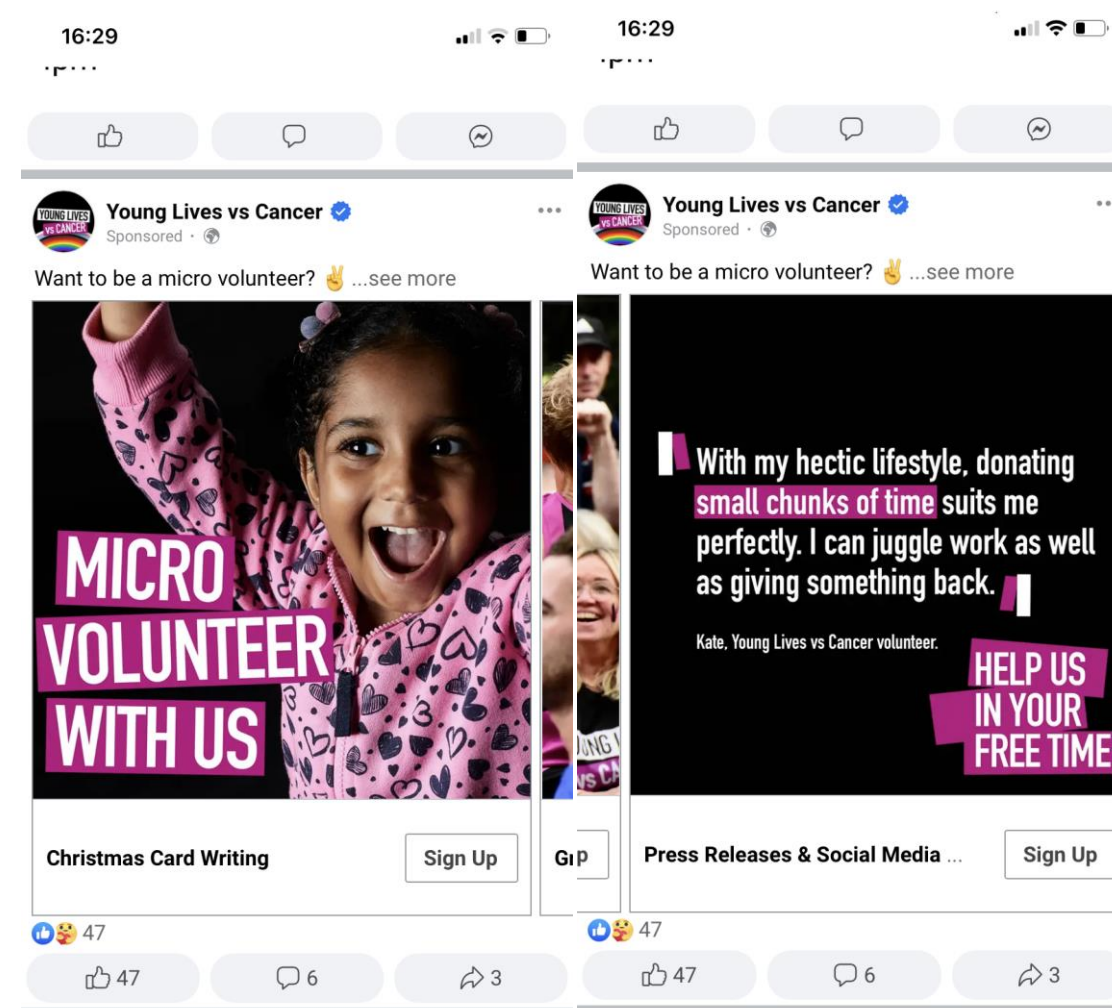


# Micro volunteering

- Response to barriers: lack of time (work, family commitments)
  - Offers opportunities to volunteer for those with disabilities, illness (mixed with digital volunteering)
- Short, simple and flexible activities, completed in a short period of time (e.g. less than an hour). Great for people with limited time or availability but still want to contribute.
- Usually no commitment to repeat, minimum formality, little or no training
- Usually does not allow to acquire new skills
- Reflects/mimics changes in professional careers, when people had 'jobs for life', now - 'in and out'
- Tasks are short, quick to start and complete
  - Examples of tasks: filling out a survey, signing a petition, sharing a social media post, making a small donation, crisis response

# Micro volunteering

- Can form habits, lead to long-term volunteering
  - two-thirds\* of micro-volunteers are willing to repeat the experience
- Immediate impact on others can be seen, instant gratification
- Examples of initiatives:
  - [Be My Eyes](#) (daily task assistance for low-visioned)
  - [Humanitarian OpenStreetMap](#) (satellite imagery to remotely map geographical info for vulnerable rural locations)
  - Young Lives vs Cancer (Christmas card writing)





# **Volunteer motivation**

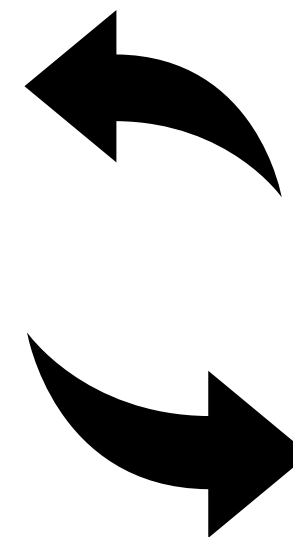
# Snyders two-factor model

This model is made by Mark Snyder and describes the spectrum of feelings each individual volunteer might have. All volunteers move around on this spectrum and will have both altruistic and egoistic (individualistic) motivations.

Model which tends to capture more **Altruistic (concerns to others)** motivation



Model which tends to capture more **Egoistic (concerns for themselves)** motivation



\* taking into consideration the social desirability criteria

Source: Mark Snyder (1993) *The Self-Monitoring of Volunteerism* ([https://comum.rcaap.pt/bitstream/10400.26/14831/1/MARIA\\_MARQUES.pdf](https://comum.rcaap.pt/bitstream/10400.26/14831/1/MARIA_MARQUES.pdf))

# Volunteer Functional Inventory

6 big groups of functional motives individuals have for choosing to volunteer

**1. VALUES**  
a way to express ones altruistic and humanitarian values

**2. UNDERSTANDING**  
a way to gain knowledge, skills, and abilities

**3. ENHANCEMENT**  
a way to grow and develop

**4. CAREER**  
a way to improve career prospects

**5. SOCIAL**  
a way to develop and strengthen social ties

**6. PROTECTIVE**  
a way of protecting from the difficulties of life (reducing negative feelings such as guilt)

# General motivation trends

- **Motivation** is a dynamic process and **tends to change** with factors such as age, context, life events etc.
  - It is a good practice to properly accompany the volunteer in order to **redirect** to tasks that might be more suitable according to the motivation.
- **Career and Skills** based motives are less and **less important** as the age of the volunteer increases.
- Volunteering in itself is not a motivation any more. The key motivational factors are:
  - **Purpose** (what am I contributing to the world/local community/my child by doing this).
  - **Social network and community**. Both for professional use, but especially for identity building is a growing trend.



# Profile of Volunteers

# Gender

- Gender-wise, formal volunteering is equally distributed, informal (more prevalent) – more women. Women take on more than 50% while men take on approximately 40% of all volunteering globally\*.
  - Sectors such as sports, religious, rescue-services predominantly men. Women tend to volunteer in healthcare, social services, education.
- Although men are harder to recruit they generally put in more hours per person than women.
- Volunteering activities hide a reverse gender gap resulting from traditional gender roles.
- Diverse and increasingly flexible volunteer opportunities help fostering more inclusive environments.
- *Example for the UK to be concious about: volunteers are evenly distributed between males and females. 80% of leadership positions (eg. Chairs, commisioners etc) were however held by men.*

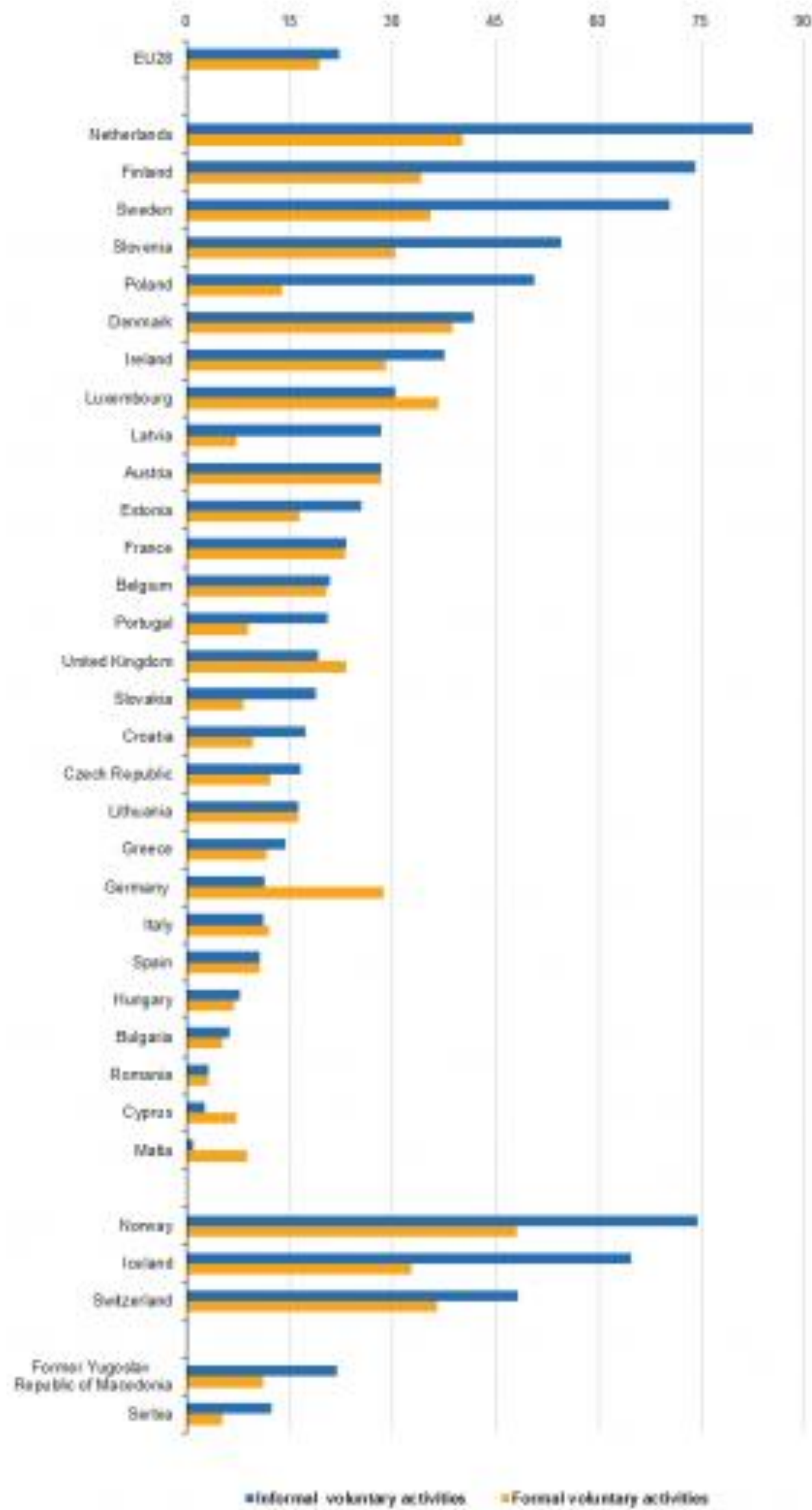
# Age

- Age follows an **inverted U shape**.
  - the average volunteer is 45 year male, volunteering in a Scandinavian sport association.
- Before COVID-19, people aged between 65–74 were the most likely to volunteer on a regular basis (formal volunteering).
- An increasing fraction of young people are volunteering – especially after COVID-19.
- Further insights into the topics and distribution of age groups should be looked into on a national or regional level, as this might be more accurate to each context.

# Occupation

- Full-time employees tend to volunteer more than unemployed
- Changing employment types, low repeatability in work-times makes it hard for people to commit.
- Those with higher education levels are most likely to volunteer.
- Students and Retirees make up two occupational groups with higher likelihood of volunteering.
- Overall: active, middle aged, employed individuals.

Participation in voluntary activities (formal and informal), 2015



# Volunteering distribution per country

Source: Eurostat online data code: rc\_scp131  
 Note: EU-28 estimated data  
 Ireland, Poland, United Kingdom: 2014 data

# Communities

- Minority communities are underrepresented in volunteering.
- Focus on general tools to investigate, rather than solutions.
- How does this interact with other work groups KPI's?
- How can we make volunteering in scouting more inclusive to environments very far from scouting.



# **Volunteering Barriers**

# Most common barriers:

## 1. Limited Time

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Many people may not be able to devote enough time to volunteering due to their work, family or personal commitments. Lack of time can be a significant barrier for many people. Sometimes this is also a perceived lack of time.

## 2. Financial Troubles

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Some people may want to volunteer but cannot afford to do so due to financial difficulties. If volunteering involves travel or other associated costs, it can be difficult for some people to participate.

## 3. Lack of Awareness of Volunteer Opportunities

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Some people may be interested in volunteering, but may not be aware of the opportunities available in their community. Lack of information or effective communication channels can limit participation in volunteering.





## 4. **Fear of Long-Term Commitment**

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Some people may be hesitant to commit to long-term volunteering for fear of not being able to keep the commitment over time. This can be especially true for those who have a busy schedule or are unsure of how much time they can spare.

## 5. **Lack of specific skills**

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Some types of volunteering require specific skills or knowledge. People may feel discouraged from volunteering if they feel they lack the skills required to contribute meaningfully.

## 6. **Health or mobility issues**

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Health or limited mobility can be a barrier for some people who would like to volunteer. Some activities may require physical effort or may not be suitable for people with certain health conditions.

## 7. Cultural and tradition

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Especially for underrepresented groups, where the culture is very important to the individual, a culture without a pre-existing tradition for volunteering is a barrier for starting as a volunteer. This might also lead to lack of acceptance from the local community.

## 8. Geographical

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Rural areas have a barrier of transportation both economic and time-wise to meet up with other volunteers. This can lead to isolation or lack of a critical amount of volunteers in secluded areas.

## 9. Barriers vary – it's all about the individual

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It's important to note that these are just some of the common barriers, and individual challenges can vary from person to person.

Volunteer opportunities should be tailored to individual needs and circumstances.





# Findings

# General finds

- The previously common long-term membership based volunteering commitment is shifting into broader perceptions, e.g. short-term, one-off, project based, third-party type of volunteering.
- Generally, the shift is towards more flexibility for individuals to shape their modes of contribution (individualization).
- Volunteers change more often between organizations. They come in for a project, and when the project ends move to the next.
- Increased awareness of social, environmental concerns (e.g. SDGs).
- Increased awareness of community and being seen and heard in the group.
- In the future organizations should consider themselves entering a sharing space together with organizations from other countries, areas etc.
- It is about community building!

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