



ENGLISH

SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of the practice and socio-demographic framework of voluntary work in the Austrian-Hungarian border region

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ANALYSIS OF THE PRACTICE AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FRAMEWORK OF VOLUNTARY WORK IN THE AUSTRIAN-HUNGARIAN BORDER REGION

Secondary data analysis

in the framework of the project Co-AGE - Institutional Cooperation for
the Promotion of Age-Friendly and Caring Communities (ATHU123) in
the Austria-Hungary INTERREG V-A Program



TABLE OF CONTENT

Summary	3
1. Introduction.....	6
The Co-AGE project	6
Objective and methodology of the analysis.....	6
2. Voluntary work	8
Definition of volunteering	8
Areas of volunteering	12
Motives for volunteering.....	15
Institutional framework of volunteering.....	17
Strategies and initiatives of the European Union	17
Framework conditions for voluntary work in Austria	23
Framework conditions for volunteering in Hungary	31
Volunteering and digitisation	38
Social benefits	40
3. quality of life of elderly people	42
Definition of "age"	42
Definition of quality of life.....	44
4. age-friendly communities.....	47
Definition of age-friendly communities	47
Best practice examples of age-friendly communities	51
Best practice examples in Europe	52
Best practice examples in Hungary	53
Best practice examples in Austria	55
List of figures	59
List of Tables.....	61
List of sources.....	62

SUMMARY

The present analysis was prepared within the project "Co-AGE Institutional Cooperation for the Promotion of Age-Friendly and Caring Communities", and is part of the guide for innovative, self-sustaining and networked communities.

The project aims to provide solutions to the everyday problems of elderly people based on voluntary commitment and joint cross-border cooperation. The aim of this analysis is to provide all project participants with a comprehensive picture of the voluntary nature and challenges of an ageing society, and to show the way to shape age-friendly communities through good regional, national and international examples, thus contributing to the successful implementation of the project.

The present secondary data analysis is based on Austrian, Hungarian and other international research results, reports and statistical data on this relevant topic.

After a brief description of the objectives of the Co-AGE project, this study defines the concept of volunteering in detail and analyses the areas of volunteering and the motives of the volunteers. The analysis shows that in Hungary, activities in the household, around the house, shopping and dealing with official channels and authorities are among the most common voluntary activities. In Austria, too, voluntary activities in the household, repair and installation work and travel services are the most common voluntary activities. Likewise, sports and leisure activities as well as activities with various emergency response organisations are among the preferred voluntary activities. Regarding the motivation of volunteers, it was found that in Hungary the classic, traditional, and purely solidarity-based voluntary activities are more typical. In Austria, on the other hand, these motives are complemented by the desire to learn, to acquire new skills and to promote one's own individual interests.

The sociodemographic analysis of volunteers is based on national and international statistical data. The analysis shows that one fifth of the total population of the 28 EU countries (2015) are formally engaged in voluntary activities and almost one quarter are active in an informal environment. In Austria, 46% of the population is engaged in voluntary activities, 31% of which carry out formal and around 30% informal voluntary activities, 15% are active in both forms. In Hungary more than one third of the population takes part in voluntary activities. A remarkable and strikingly high percentage here is the 90% share of informal voluntary work. The volunteer rate between the sexes is relatively balanced and is around 50% in both the European Union and in both countries of the project region. Statistics show that the percentage of volunteers with higher education is highest in the EU. In Austria, most volunteers have a vocational school qualification, in Hungary, VET and higher education

volunteers make up the largest share. With regard to the participation of volunteers according to age groups, the proportions are proportionally distributed between the different age groups in the EU and in Austria, with about 20% each. This means that young people and elderly people are equally active, even if participation drops above the age of 75. In Hungary, participation by age group is similar. However, it is interesting to note that older generations are more active there than younger generations.

The study also shows how traditional volunteering can be integrated into the digital world of the 21st century and how volunteering and modern technology can be combined. The use of new technologies, such as smartphones, not only facilitates the organisation and coordination of volunteering activities, e.g. by using social media interfaces, but also connects volunteers with those in need. There are already numerous apps, such as "Be my eyes", where, for example, visually impaired people are given the eyes of sighted volunteers via a video call.

Based on international studies, the definitions of "age" and "quality of life" are also presented in detail. The World Health Organisation (WHO) speaks of the onset of ageing in people over 60. According to UN statistics, the proportion of elderly people in the EU is 22% and could rise to 30% by 2050. The common goal of all societies should be to ensure the quality of life and well-being of elderly people. The present analysis also looks at the concept of quality of life and examines both objective (economic goods, property) and subjective (feeling of happiness, satisfaction) factors related to quality of life.

The concluding chapter links the previously described problems related to ageing and volunteering and describes the importance of age-friendly communities as defined by the WHO using good examples from Hungary, Austria and the EU. To ensure a liveable and comfortable environment for the older generation, several major areas should be reformed. These include the provision of safe and affordable public transport, the provision of housing geared to the needs of elderly people, initiatives to promote social activities, the safe and barrier-free design of public buildings and public spaces, and the development of a supportive social and health system. The sense of security and well-being of elderly people can be enhanced with the use of state-of-the-art technologies, such as the emergency wristband, or complex Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) systems, which offer elderly people security and comfort solutions for their homes.

The analysis shows that the Co-AGE project fits in well with current EU strategies and directives in terms of its objectives and motives. The countries of the European Union, including Austria and Hungary, are well on the way to promoting age-friendly societies and creating an age-friendly living environment. Creative and practical measures have already been implemented in the framework of numerous projects to promote the living conditions, satisfaction and well-being of the older

generation. To this end, the Co-AGE project has also been set up, which contributes to the creation of a Europe for all generations through voluntary work and cross-border solutions.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Co-AGE project

Two relevant objectives of the Co-AGE project are on the one hand to increase the quality of life of elderly people in the Austrian-Hungarian border region and on the other hand to strengthen institutional cooperation. The migration of young people to large cities, emigration, the increasingly ageing population and the lack of qualified personnel lead to a deterioration in the quality of life of elderly people. Elderly people left alone often feel lonely and excluded, and often need help in coping with everyday problems, in society as well. The Co-AGE project has devised a solution to this problem based on voluntary work. During the implementation of the project, elderly people will be supported by volunteers and integrated into society through various activities and programmes. Volunteers will be coordinated by so-called confidants, who will receive comprehensive training in the areas of ageing and volunteering. They will also act as an interface between volunteers and voluntary organisations. The age-friendly communities formed in this way will be networked across borders through the project. In addition to events and the opportunity to establish personal contacts, the project also uses social media channels to create networks. In the project, special virtual village squares will be created to connect the population of the participating communities. The communities can develop further by sharing new ideas using best practice examples. Through this knowledge transfer, they can support each other and become caring communities for elderly people.

The project aims to strengthen the cooperation of institutions, professional associations, parishes, church communities and local public authorities in a sustainable way. Not only should a network of the participating municipalities be formed, but also a close cooperation with the available relevant institutions should be established to ensure the sustainability of the project.

Objective and methodology of the analysis

The analysis is part of the "Guide for innovative, self-care and networked communities" which, among other things, is intended to provide trusted advisers in the communities and participating organisations with an overview of the problems of an ageing society, the framework conditions for voluntary activities and possible approaches to developing age-friendly communities. The aim of the analysis is to present comprehensive results from statistics and reports, to provide relevant data and expert reports and to show good examples from Austria, Hungary and the whole European Union.

The survey was conducted in the form of a secondary data analysis, i.e. it is based on existing studies and analyses prepared by various research institutes, municipalities, or organisations. Within the

framework of our survey we have examined the areas of voluntary work, ageing and age-friendly communities at EU level, in particular at Austrian and Hungarian level. The basis for this analysis is provided by data from the National Statistical Office (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal - KSH) in Hungary, the Institute for Empirical Social Research (IFES) in Austria and the European Statistical Office (Eurostat), among others. The analysis was based on surveys of the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations (UN) and various regional researches and examines the conditions of various social care networks as well as demographic indicators in the program region.

2. VOLUNTARY WORK

Definition of volunteering

The English word “volunteer” is derived from the Latin word “voluntarius” and means will/inclination. The interpretation of the term “volunteering” can change depending on individuals, cultures and countries, as the forms and image of volunteering are strongly influenced by history, politics, religion and culture. While voluntary work is considered valuable and highly valued in one country, the same activity is not considered voluntary work in another country. The concept of volunteering also differs at international level. The concept of volunteering varies from personality to personality, from culture to culture and from country to country, as history, politics, religion and culture strongly influence the forms of volunteering and the way it is perceived. An official definition of volunteering already exists everywhere in the countries of the European Union. While some countries see the definition of volunteering as an individual personal choice, others define voluntary activities by organisation or by the nature of the individual activities. However, despite the many different interpretations, the basic, essential characteristics of volunteering are clearly defined. A United Nations report¹ drawn up in the context of the International Year of Volunteering in 2001 defines three specific characteristics of volunteering:

1. Volunteering is unpaid and not for financial gain, but the costs incurred by volunteers are in some cases eligible for reimbursement
2. The activity must be voluntary, i.e. it is undertaken of one's own free will
3. The activity is carried out in any case for the benefit of other persons or the company

This definition was supplemented by a fourth point in the European Charter of the Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers in 2012², and defined volunteering as follows:

An activity can only be considered as voluntary if it

1. is carried out by a person of his or her own free will, devoting time and effort to activities that benefit other people and society as a whole
2. is unpaid (although costs directly related to the activity may be reimbursed)

¹ Report on volunteering at the Special Session on Social Development of the United Nations General Assembly, Geneva, (February 2001)

² https://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/volunteering_charter_en.pdf

3. is carried out for charitable purposes primarily within the framework of a non-governmental organisation and is therefore not aimed at obtaining material or financial benefits
4. is not exercised as a substitute for gainful employment. " (European Union website, 2013)³

A precise definition of the term "volunteering" is very important as it allows us to distinguish voluntary activities from work, internships or social work. In the past, the term voluntary work was widely used. The term is still used, but today volunteering is increasingly used. A crucial difference is that work is generally based on a contract or is based on a consideration in the form of a wage and is not unpaid. Activities during a traineeship are often unpaid, are carried out without financial consideration and serve only the interests of the trainees. Neither do activities during a traineeship usually serve the general interest of society. Social work, for example, is not a voluntary activity, but a compulsory activity.⁴

Volunteers are thus persons who, of their own free will and without financial compensation, carry out various activities for the benefit of other people not living in their own household and/or for society (groups, communities, animals or the environment). Voluntary activity includes in any case activities carried out on a voluntary basis for the public good, which are intended to bring about an improvement in society.⁵ Volunteering creates added value because volunteers do not work instead of a paid employee but complement this work and thus contribute to improving the living environment in society. Voluntary activities can be carried out individually or in groups, regularly or on a case-by-case basis (e.g. in emergencies), at home or abroad, formally or informally.

Formal voluntary activities take place in the context of organisations. Most often, these are volunteers registered with non-profit or non-governmental organisations or with public organisations. Informal voluntary activities, on the other hand, are activities carried out on a private basis, such as regular shopping for a needy neighbour. Formal, organised volunteering is often complemented by informal voluntary activities.⁶

³ https://europa.eu/youth/eu/article/46/1021_de

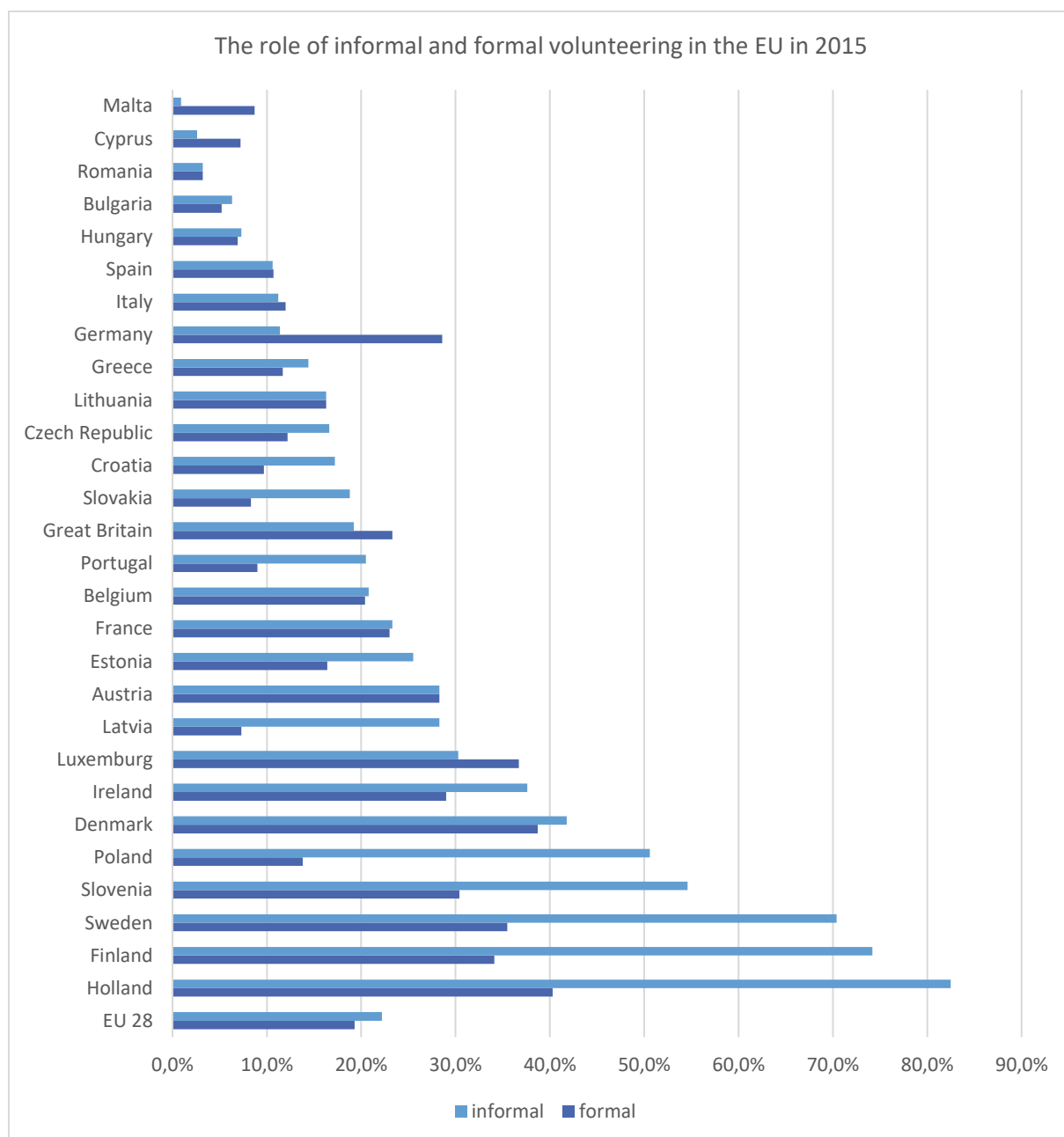
⁴ Czike & Kuti (2006) - Önkéntesség, Jótékonyság, társadalmi integráció [Voluntary work, charity, social integration].

⁵ Bartal, A.M., & Saródy, Z. (2010). Körkép - Az önkéntesség helyzete és szerepe az Európai Unió egyes tagállamaiban az önkéntes motivációs kutatások tükrében. [The situation and role of volunteering in some Member States of the European Union in the light of voluntary motivation research]. Civil Szemle, 7

⁶ 1st report on volunteering in Austria (2009) Prepared by the Institute for Interdisciplinary Nonprofit Research at the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration (NPO Institute)

In 2015, participation in informal voluntary activities (22.2%) was slightly higher in the 28 EU Member States than in formal voluntary activities (19.3%). In most countries informal activities are in the majority. Striking exceptions are Germany, Malta and Cyprus.

Figure 1 | Proportion of participation in informal and formal voluntary activities in the 28 EU Member States, 2015 (inhabitants aged 16 and over)



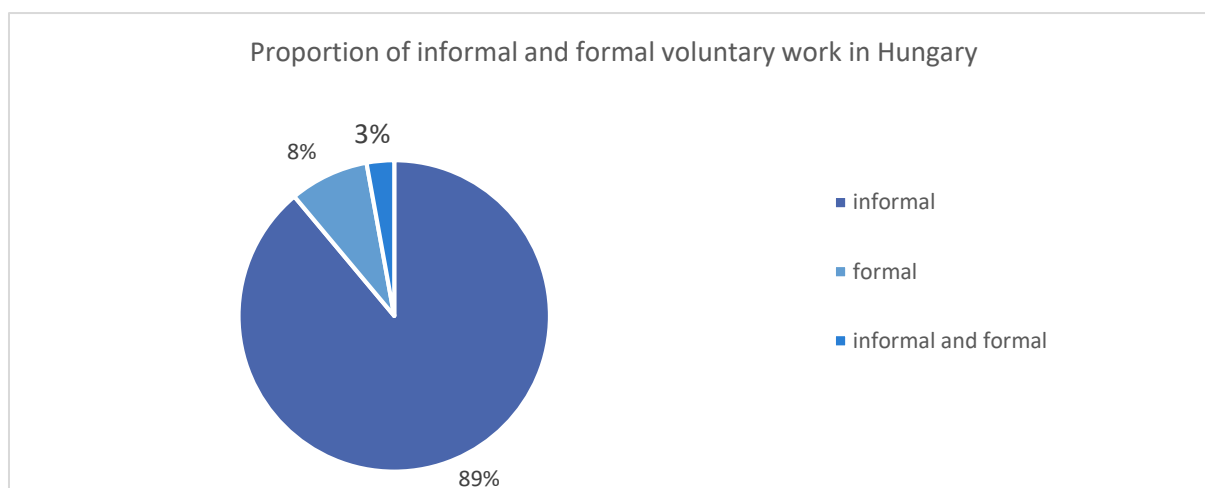
Source: Eurostat ⁷

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https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php/Social_participation_and_integration_statistics#Formal_and_informal_voluntary_activities

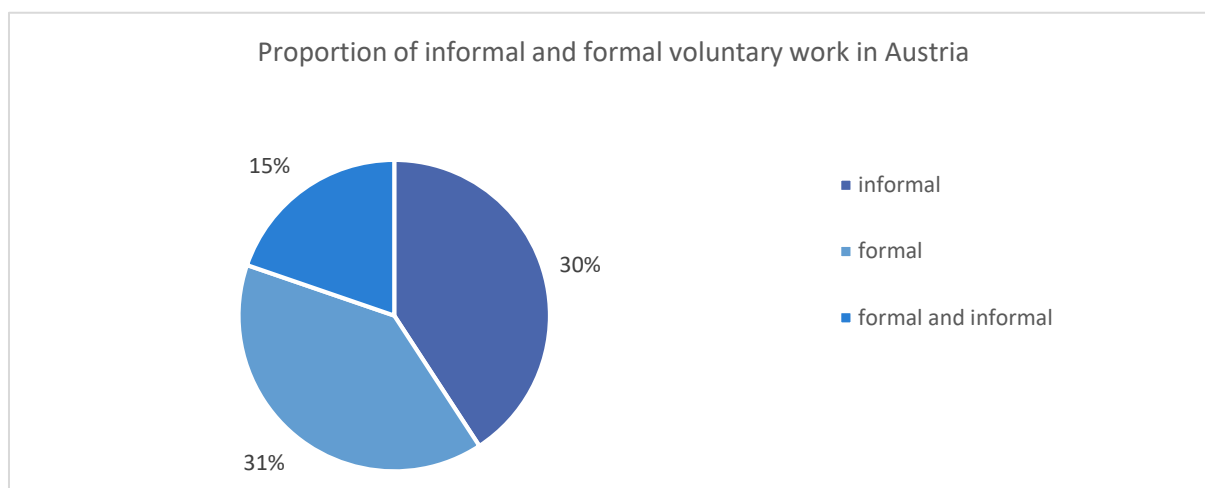
According to an analysis of the Hungarian National Statistical Office from 2019, the readiness for informal voluntary work was much greater than the formal one. 89% of the volunteers between the ages of 15 and 74 were engaged in informal voluntary activities.

Figure 2 | Share of participation in informal and formal voluntary activities in Hungary, 2019



Source: KSH ⁸

Figure 3 | Share of participation in informal and formal voluntary activities in Austria, 2016



Source: IFES

In Austria about three out of ten people, i.e. 30%, carry out formal voluntary activities and about the same number are involved in informal voluntary activities. About 15% of the population carries out activities in both forms, i.e. half of those who volunteer are active in both forms.

⁸ https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_evkozi_9_13

Areas of volunteering

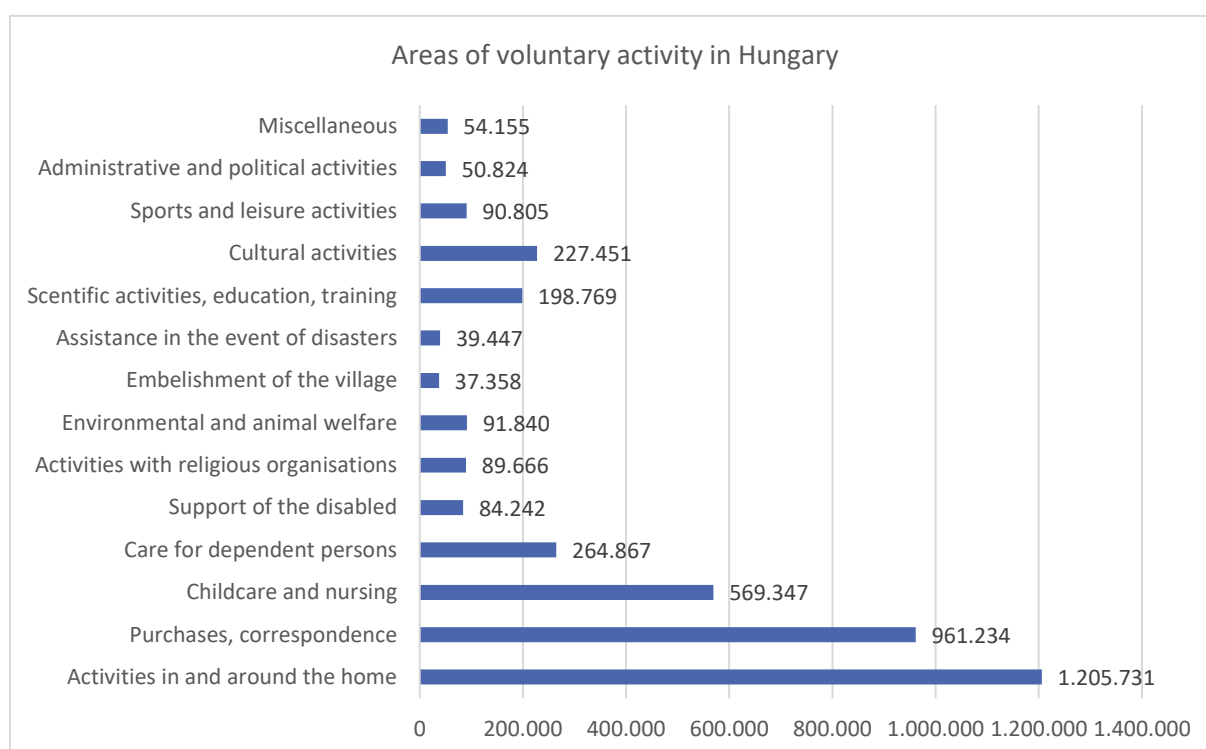
Voluntary activities are diverse, but most of them belong to areas that promote social integration, reduce poverty and exclusion, support education and environmental protection, and are associated with sports and emergency services (such as the voluntary fire brigade or rescue services). Within these areas it also varies which activities are formal, i.e. organised, and which are informal, i.e. carried out in the company of acquaintances or friends. Mutual support and help within the circle of family or friends is of high relevance and is particularly popular in Eastern Europe. This often works very well spontaneously and without any organisation or external support.⁹

Such traditional, informal voluntary activities include, for example, helping with housework, working around the house, shopping, babysitting, childcare, tutoring, caring for and visiting elderly people, nursing, helping with dealing with authorities and delivering lunch. These areas can also be carried out in a formal way, with the volunteer activities being carried out on behalf of an organisation. The most common forms of formal volunteering include, on the one hand, working with children, including organising sports and leisure programmes or various events, craft workshops, care at summer camps and various lectures on prevention, and, on the other hand, caring for the elderly in their own homes, social institutions or hospitals. In addition, education can be considered as the most common formal volunteering activity. Other forms of formal volunteering include supporting, caring for and feeding the homeless, caring for disabled people and supporting their families, providing assistance in crisis situations, fundraising, activities related to different religions, involvement in various voluntary organisations.¹⁰ According to a survey conducted by the Hungarian National Statistical Office (KSH) in 2019, the Hungarian volunteers interviewed mainly take on tasks related to the home or housework, administration, shopping and childcare. These areas are the most popular because they can be done mainly on their own initiative and not on behalf of an organisation.

⁹ KSH (2011) - Önkéntes munka Magyarországon A Munkaerő-felmérés, 2011. III. Negyedévi kiegészítő felvétele) [Voluntary work in Hungary (Labour Force Survey, supplementary survey for the 3rd quarter 2011)].

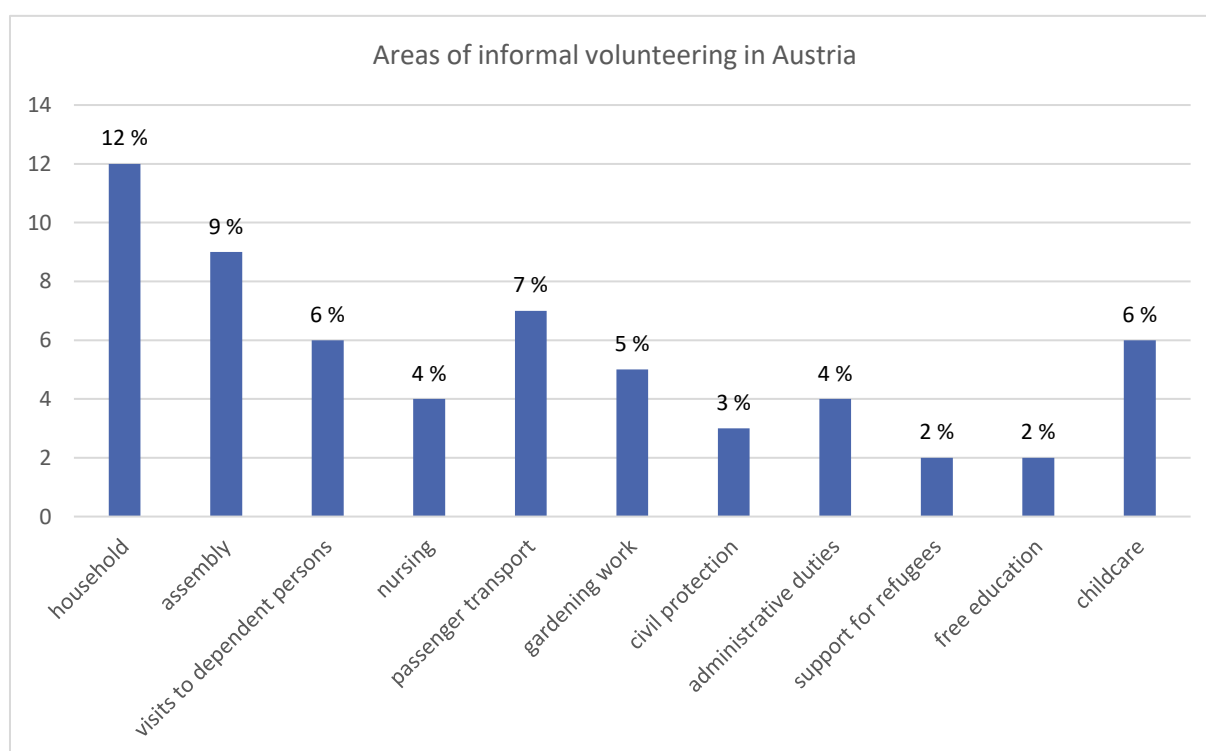
¹⁰ <https://malta.hu/magyarontentesseg>

Figure 4 | Areas of voluntary activity (informal and formal) in Hungary 2019



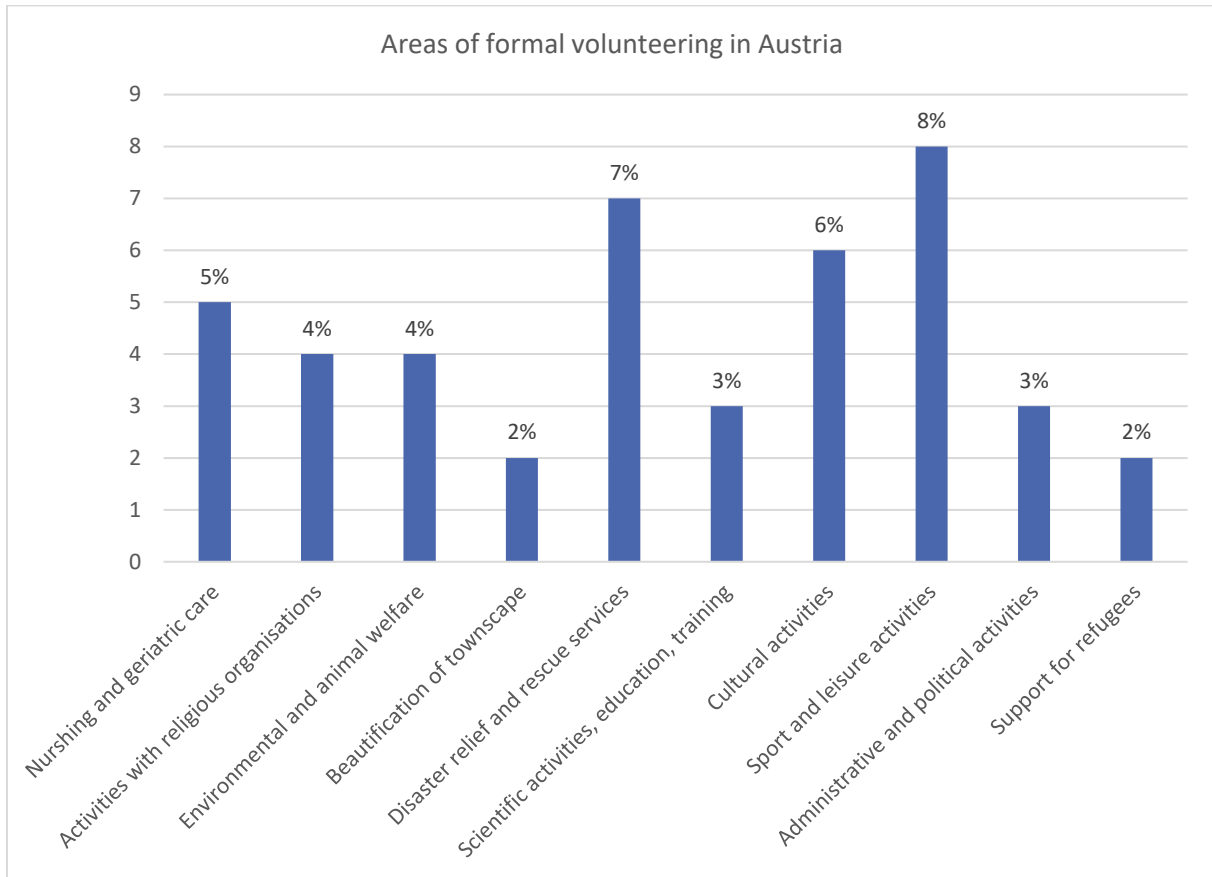
Source: KSH

Figure 5 | Areas of informal volunteering in Austria, 2016



Source: IFES

Figure 6 | Areas of formal voluntariness in Austria, 2016



Source: IFES

As shown in Figures 5 and 6, informal voluntary activities such as housework, repair and assembly work and passenger transport are the most popular in Austria. In contrast, the most common formal voluntary activities include sports and leisure activities as well as activities for public safety and civil protection. Less frequently, activities for refugee assistance, beautification of the townscape, economic development or educational topics are taken on.

Motives for volunteering

The reasons and motives of volunteers can basically be divided into two groups, with a distinction being made between traditional and new motives.¹¹ Traditional motives are shaped by old social values, solidarity, social empathy and the desire to help others.¹² This kind of voluntary work is often also religiously motivated and based on humanitarian social commitment. The main aim is to help the needy and the poor and to support marginalised social groups. For volunteers, the main motivation is the joy of helping and the feel good factor associated with it. Often, faith in religions, organisations or membership of a community, in addition to a sense of moral duty, are also key motivating factors.

New motives for volunteering, on the other hand, build on the added value and the many personal benefits that go hand in hand with this commitment. Volunteers are no longer motivated solely by inner social empathy but engage in voluntary activities to expand and improve their own knowledge and skills.

The world has changed in the sense that young adults today often choose a profession that they will not pursue for life. They usually do not stay in their first job and often do not become experts in a single profession, but change professions several times during their lives, facing new challenges. After the acquired theoretical knowledge, it is often not possible to gain practical experience. Therefore, more and more young people decide to volunteer to build relationships, networks and to gain professional experience. It is particularly motivating to carry out voluntary activities abroad, as in addition to professional experience, a language can be learned, new friendships can be made and leisure time can be spent meaningfully in a new environment. The new motives for volunteering are interest-oriented, as volunteers act primarily in their own interest to gain new experiences or to take advantage of new professional challenges and opportunities. In this case, the motives do not include a feeling of charity or solidarity.¹³

The difference between traditional and new voluntarism also means in most cases a generation gap. Traditional volunteering is mainly chosen by women over 35 who are married or living with a partner

¹¹ Czike & Bartal (2005) - Nonprofit szervezetek és önkéntesek - új szervezeti típusok és az önkéntes tevékenységet végzők motivációi [Nonprofit organisations and volunteers - new types of organisations and motivations for volunteers].

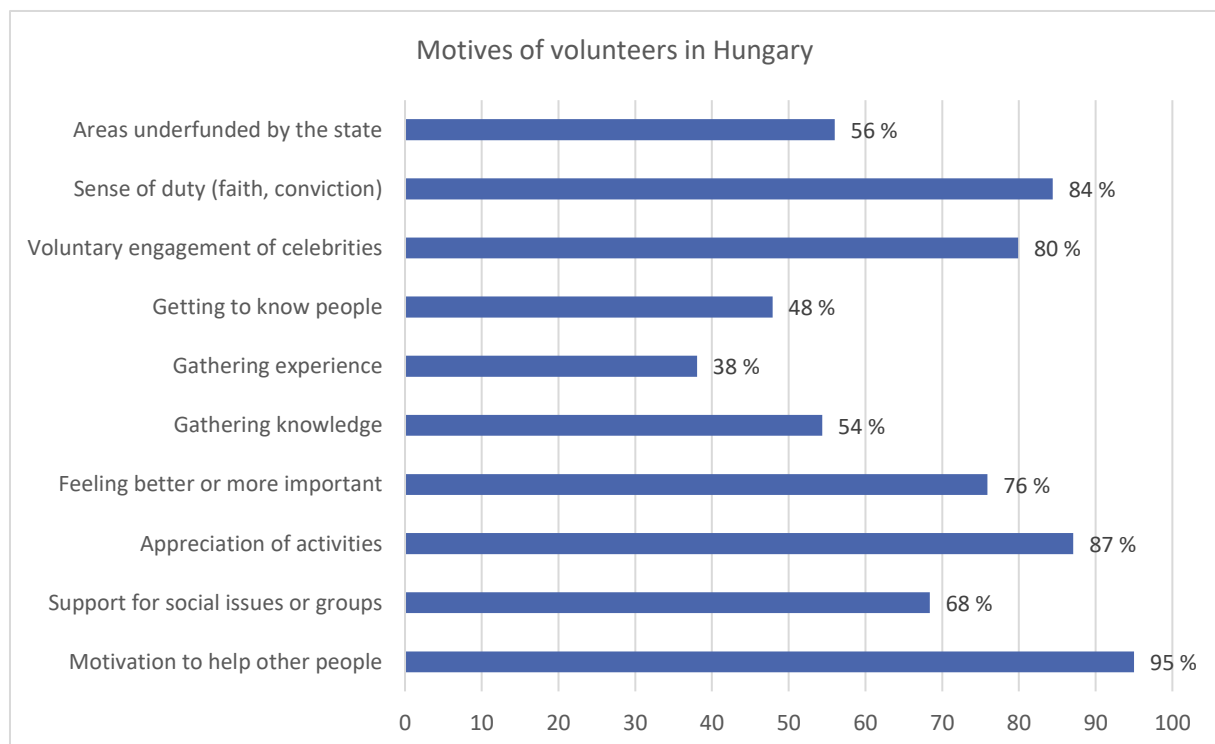
¹² Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz - 3. Bericht zum freiwilligen Engagement in Österreich (2019) [Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection - 3rd Report on Voluntary Work in Austria (2019)]

¹³ Czike & Kuti (2006) - Önkéntesség, Jótékonyág, társadalmi integráció [Voluntary work, charity, social integration].

and already have a family of their own. The new form of volunteering tends to encourage the younger generation to volunteer, i.e. young adults under 26 years of age, single and without children, who are still looking for a career or are about to start working.¹⁴ The two types of motives can also change over the course of a volunteer's life, if his or her goals and circumstances change. Therefore, the motives for volunteering may change over time.

In Hungary it is clear that volunteers are driven by traditional motives. In first place is solidarity and the desire to help.

Figure 7 | Motives of the volunteers interviewed in Hungary in 2019

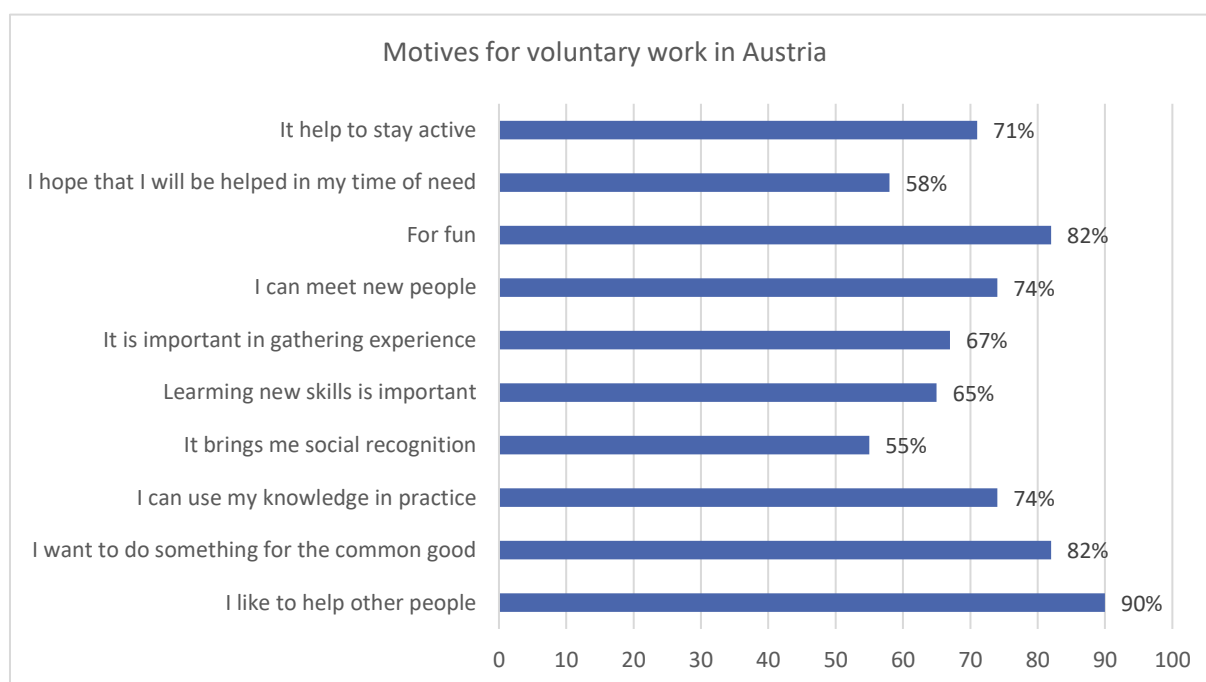


Source: KSH

In Austria, the line between new and traditional motives is somewhat blurred, with neither value standing out. Apart from the willingness to help others, an important motivating factor is also to put existing knowledge into practice or to acquire new skills and knowledge. In Austria, therefore, volunteers are encouraged not only to show solidarity, but also to volunteer through the opportunity for personal and professional development.

¹⁴ Czike & Bartal (2005) - Nonprofit szervezetek és önkéntesek - új szervezeti típusok és az önkéntes tevékenységet végzők motivációi [Nonprofit organisations and volunteers - new types of organisations and motivations for volunteers].

Figure 8 | Motives of respondents in Austria 2016



Source: IFES

Institutional framework of volunteering

STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

In the history of the European Union (EU), the first relevant document on voluntary activity is the 1983 statement adopted by the European Parliament (EP).¹⁵ In the statement on voluntary activity, the EP and the European Commission (EC) called for the drafting of a law on voluntary activity and the removal of obstacles in this area. The EP also put forward a proposal to develop a European voluntary network. In the history of the EU, several proposals, statements and declarations have been drawn up which can be considered as milestones in the development of the legal framework. An example is the 38th Declaration of the Amsterdam Treaty¹⁶ on Voluntary Service, the EC White Paper on Youth Policy in 2001¹⁷, Article 214 of the Lisbon Treaty on the creation of a Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps, the European Agenda¹⁸ for Voluntary Service Policy in 2011 in the Year of Volunteering, or the European

¹⁵ European Parliament (1984) - Resolution on Voluntary Work, OJEC C 010, 16 January 1984 [Resolution on Voluntary Work, OJ C 010 of 16 January 1984]

¹⁶ European Commission (1997) Treaty of Amsterdam - Declaration 38 on voluntary service activities

¹⁷ Commission White Paper of 21 November 2001: "A new impetus for European Youth

¹⁸ Policy Agenda on Volunteering in Europe P.A.V.E Working towards a true legacy for EYV [Politische Agenda für Freiwilligenarbeit in Europa]

Charter¹⁹ on the Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers and the EP opinion on the recognition and promotion of cross-border volunteering in the EU²⁰ in 2012.

In addition to the technical policy documents and information campaigns, many other EU initiatives and programmes have been launched to promote the idea of volunteering, or to create space and channels for organised volunteering. These programmes are closely linked to Community sectoral policies on education, sport, social policy, the environment or youth.²¹

European Centre for Voluntary Work (CEV - Centre Européen du Volontariat)

The European Centre for Voluntary Work (CEV) was founded in 1992 and is a European network of more than 60 centres for voluntary work which work together at national and regional level to support and promote volunteers and voluntary workers at European, national and regional level respectively. CEV summarises the problems and proposals for each of its members to the European Council and the institutions of the European Union. Through this active exchange of information, the organisation ensures the sustainability of the results of the European Year of Volunteering 2011 and the implementation of the proposals of the Policy Agenda for Volunteering (PAVE) in Europe.

European Voluntary Service (EVS)

The European Voluntary Service is an international volunteer programme funded by the European Commission which offers young people between 18 and 30 years of age the opportunity to do voluntary work for 2 to 12 months with an organisation or government body in Europe, Africa, Asia or South America. The participating organisations offer a variety of voluntary activities, mainly in the fields of culture, environmental protection, sport, media and on various social issues. Expenses for board and lodging, accommodation and travel have been funded by the European Commission. In 2018 the European Voluntary Service got replaced by the European Solidarity Corps programme.

¹⁹ European Youth Forum (2012) - European Charter on the rights and responsibilities of volunteers
https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/volunteering_charter_en.pdf

²⁰ Cross-border voluntary activities in the EU European Parliament resolution of 12 June 2012 on recognising and promoting cross-border voluntary activities in the EU

²¹ Study on Volunteering in the European Union Final Report (2010)
https://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/doc1018_en.pdf

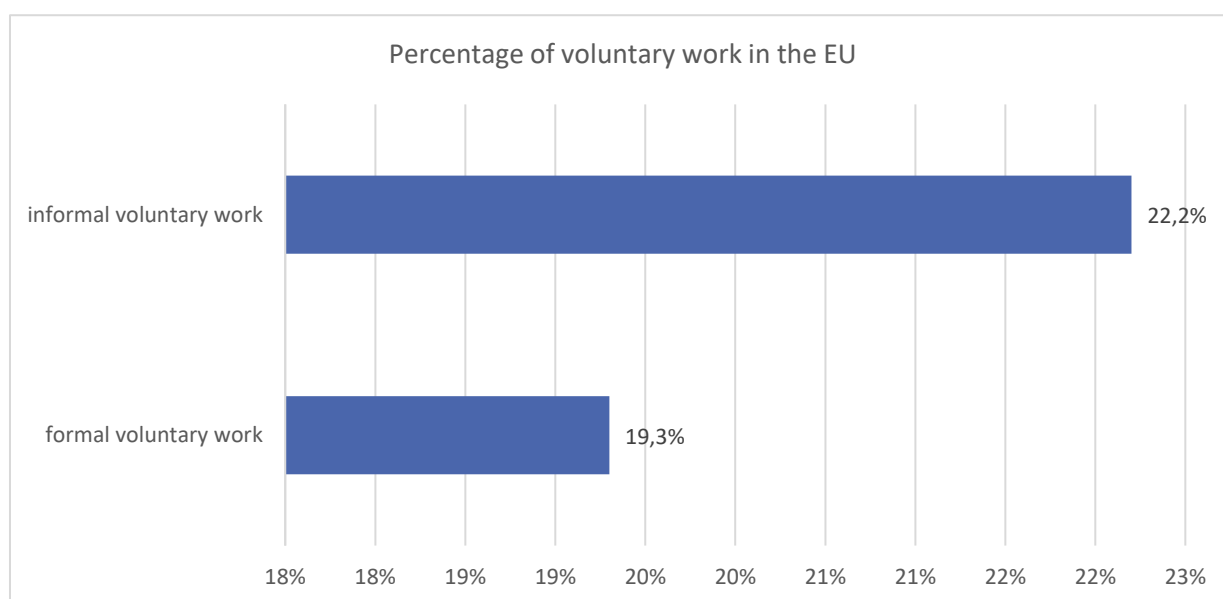
European Solidarity Corps (ESC)

The European Solidarity Corps gives young people the opportunity to take part in voluntary projects in their own country or abroad. You can sign up for the ESC at the age of 17, but participation in voluntary project work is only possible between 18 and 30. One of the basic conditions for participation is to agree to the mission and principles of the organisation. There are two ways to carry out voluntary activities in the programme. One is the voluntary activity and is usually carried out full-time. The costs of accommodation, travel, food, insurance and pocket money are covered. The second option is to participate in an employment project, which in practice means a job with an employment contract and where practical experience can be gained in humanitarian organisations. In this case, you will receive a salary in the respective member state and cover your living expenses from this income. Organisations wishing to participate in the work of the European Solidarity Corps can apply for funding under eight programmes, such as the Erasmus+ programme.

Statistical data on voluntary work participation

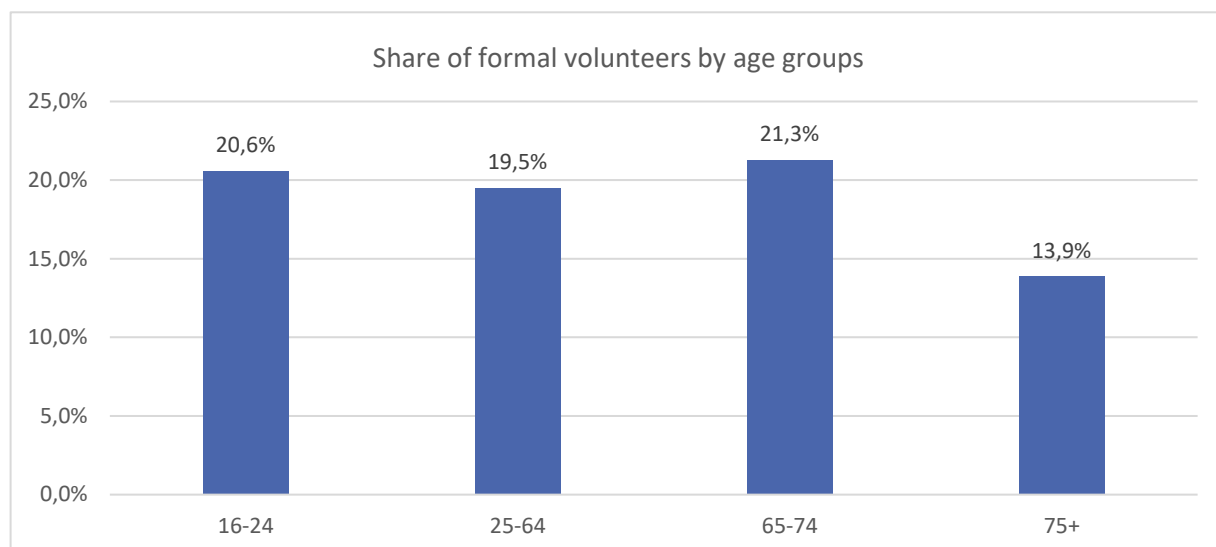
Statistical data on voluntary work within the EU are available at Eurostat. Eurostat statistics show that in 2015, just over 19% of the total population of the 28 EU countries were engaged in formal voluntary activities (within an organisation). Between 16 and 74 years old, all age groups volunteered more or less equally. However, the proportion of volunteers decreased with age, beyond the age of 75.

Figure 9 | Share of voluntary work in the EU, 2015



Source: Eurostat

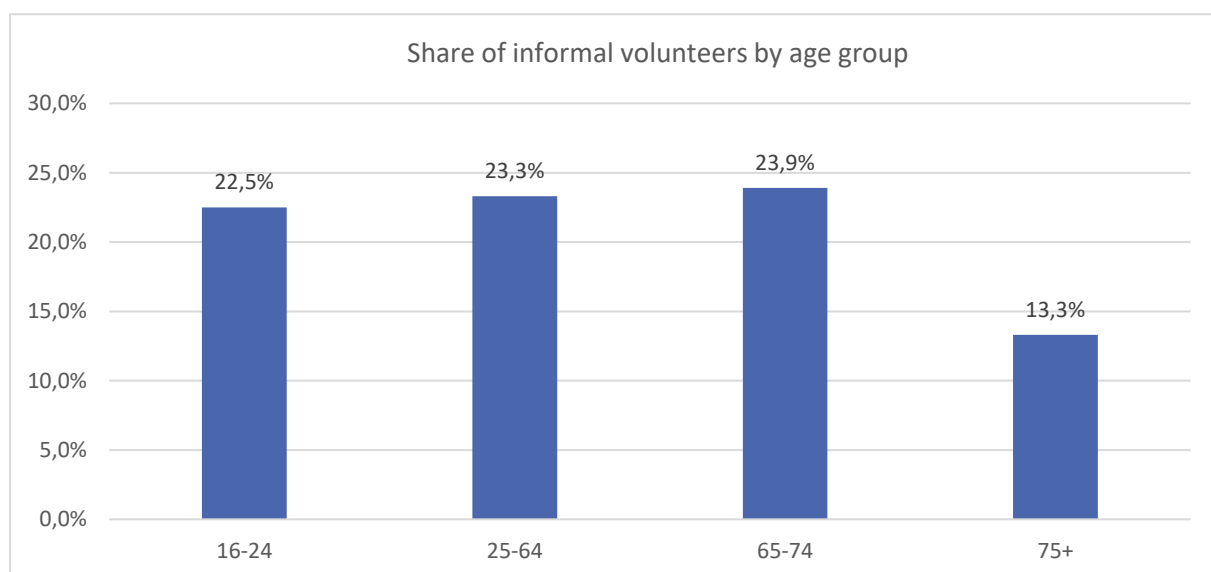
Figure 10 | Participation in formal voluntary work by age group in the EU, 2015



Source: Eurostat

The share of informal voluntary activities is relatively high, exceeding 22% of the EU population in 2015. However, for people over 75 years of age, the proportion is clearly decreasing.

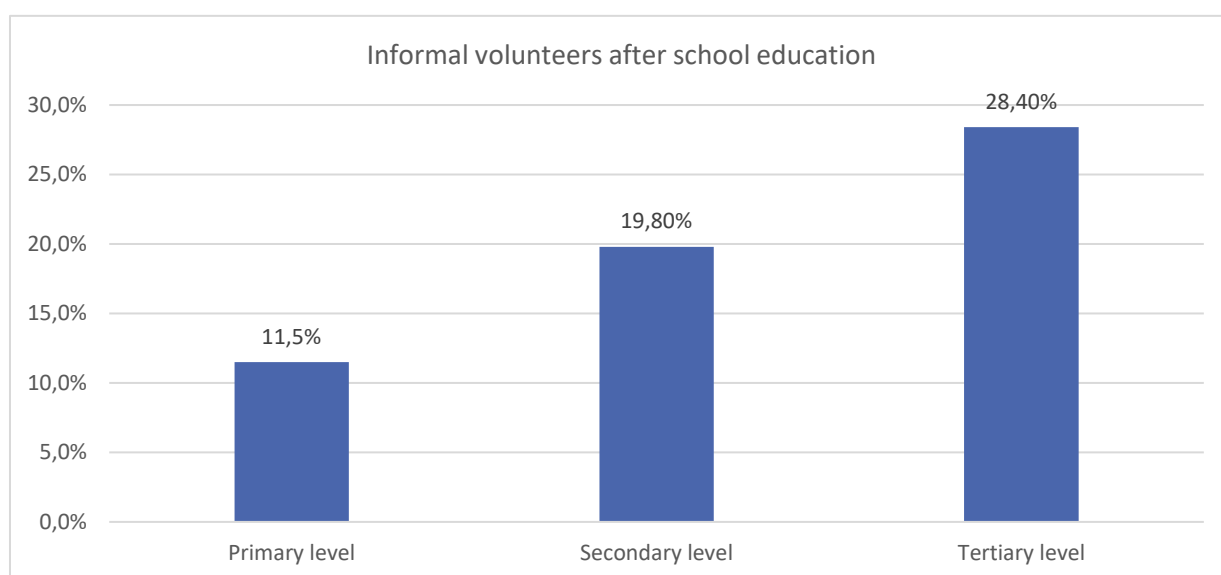
Figure 11 | Share of informal voluntary work by age group in the EU, 2015



Source: Eurostat

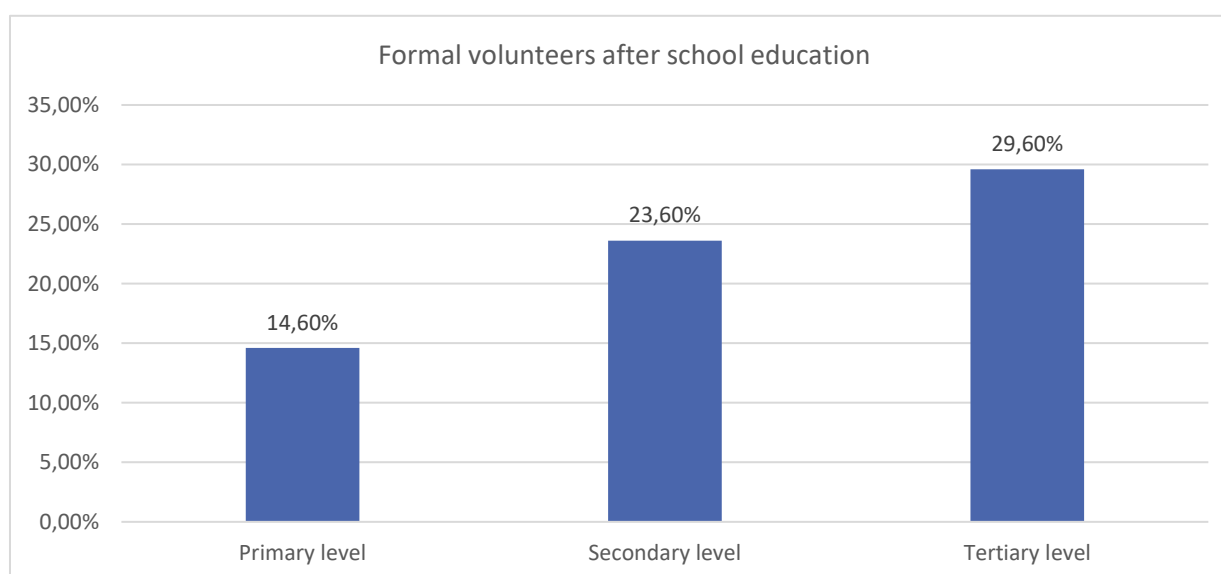
When we compare participation in volunteering in the EU after school education, it is clear that in both informal and formal volunteering, the proportion of people with a university degree is exceptionally high, at almost 30%.

Figure 12 | Participation in formal volunteering after school education in the EU, 2015



Source: Eurostat

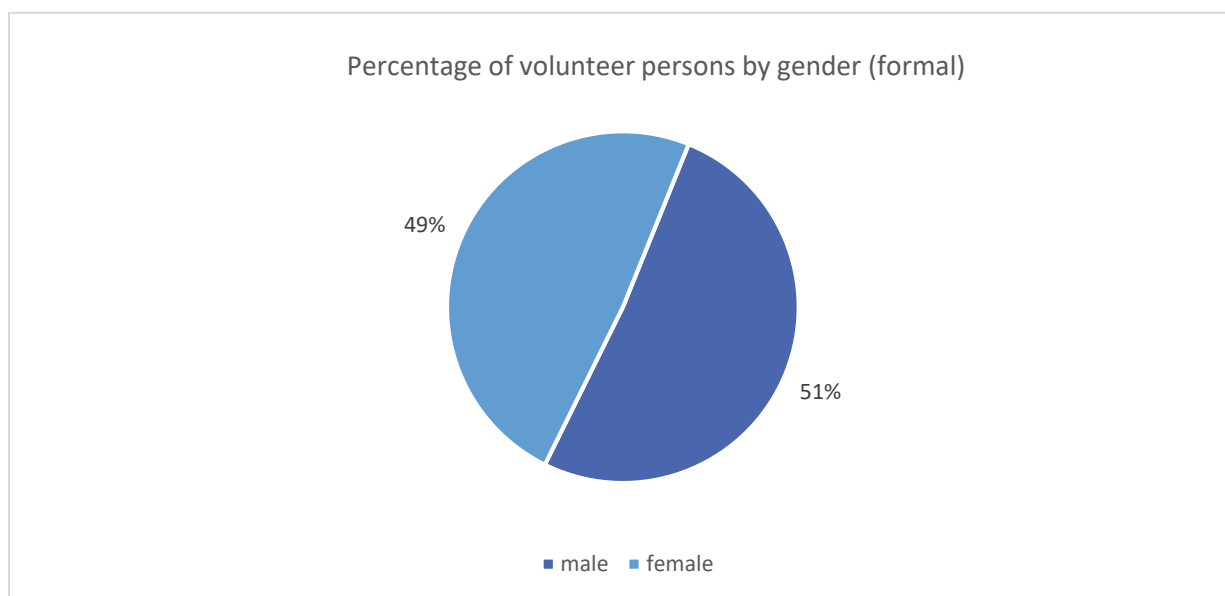
Figure 13 | Participation in informal voluntary work after school education in the EU, 2015



Source: Eurostat

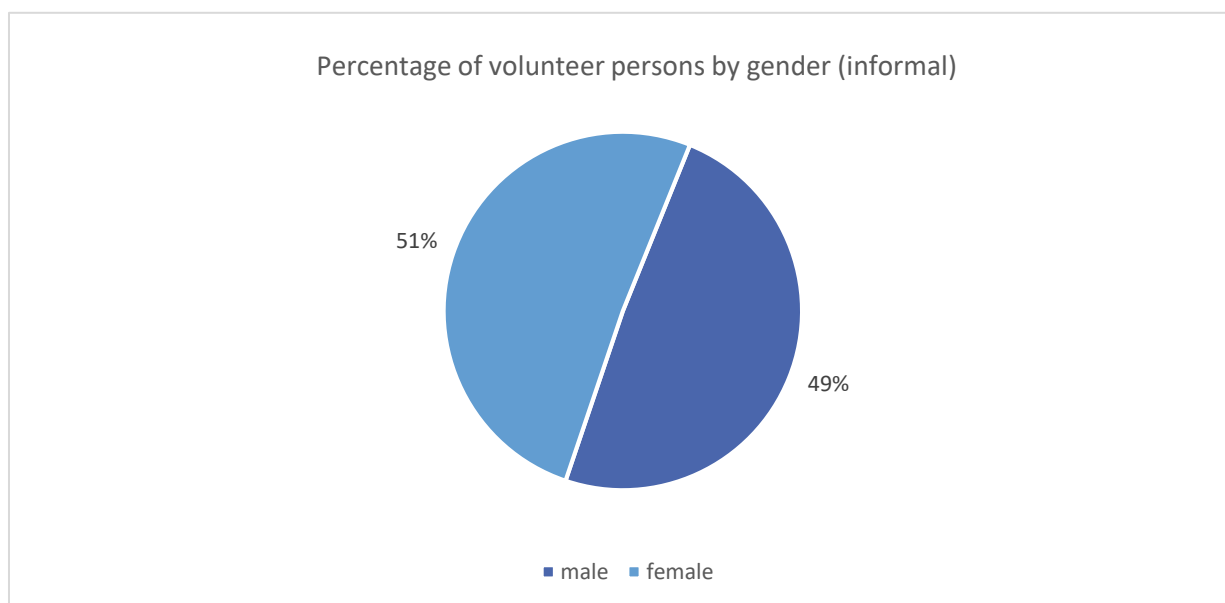
According to Eurostat statistics, there is not much difference between the sexes in terms of participation rates. The proportion of women and men in both formal and informal activities is about half each.

Figure 14 | Voluntary work by gender in the EU, 2015



Source: Eurostat

Figure 15 | Voluntary work by gender in the EU, 2015



Source: Eurostat

Framework conditions for voluntary work in Austria

In Austria we talk about different forms of voluntary work, different terms are used for this. The term voluntary work includes voluntary work, voluntary activity, unpaid voluntary work and social commitment. All terms are based on voluntariness, yet they differ in nuances. It is therefore important to define them individually.²²

- **Voluntary position**

A voluntary position is the voluntary acceptance of a function which is exercised regularly, for a limited period of time, without remuneration and mostly within organisations, associations, institutions, initiatives or projects. These are mainly elected, appointed or nominated positions, such as association functionaries, functionaries on the local council, advisory boards, works councils, active members of the school council, voluntary fire brigade or rescue service.

- **Volunteering**

The concept of voluntariness is already another concept, as it covers all those activities carried out of one's own free will, including the support of our relatives. Voluntary activity, on the other hand, is already a narrow concept, as already explained in the definition. Voluntary activities in Austria include activities carried out by a volunteer of his or her own free will, without remuneration, outside the home. Voluntary activity means practically the same thing, supplemented by personal attachment to a subject, such as the exercise of voluntary activities with a political party.

Special forms of volunteering²³

- **Voluntary Social Year (FSJ)**

The Federal Act on the Promotion of Voluntary Work (FreiwG)²⁴ came into force on 1 June 2012, thus creating a legal basis for the Voluntary Social Year, which has already been in existence in Austria for 40 years. The Voluntary Social Year (Freiwilliges Soziale Jahr, FSJ) is one of the special forms of voluntary commitment in Austria and is carried out by young people free of charge in the interest of the common good. Persons without a relevant completed VET qualification or without a higher education degree can participate in the programme after

²²1st report on volunteering in Austria (2009) Prepared by the Institute for Interdisciplinary Nonprofit Research at the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration (NPO-Institute)

²³ <http://www.freiwilligenweb.at/sonderformen>

²⁴ The Federal Act on the Promotion of Voluntary Work (Freiwilligengesetz - FreiwG, BGBl I No. 17/2012 as amended)

reaching the age of 17. During the FSJ, participants work for 10 to 12 months at an Austrian social welfare institution (without employment). They carry out voluntary work primarily in the following areas of activity: Disability assistance, care of the elderly, childcare, care of the homeless and similar activities. It serves in particular to deepen previous school education, to get to know different professions in practice, to develop personality, to get to know social professions in particular, to strengthen social skills and to promote social commitment. Participants are also offered various educational programmes during the FSJ year. Volunteers work 34 hours a week and, if necessary, receive a subsidy for accommodation and travel costs. Since 2016, it has been possible for young men to count towards their own civil service a continuous period of at least 10 months of service with an assignment assigned by a recognised institution. This possibility is often used, as the FSJ provides favourable conditions for the participant.²⁵

- **Voluntary Environmental Year**

Like the FSJ, the Voluntary Environmental Year is also one of the special forms of voluntary commitment. It is possible to register from the age of 17, and here it is a prerequisite that participants do not have any relevant completed vocational training. The aim of the programme is also to deepen previous school education, to familiarise participants with the various professions in practice, to develop their personality, to strengthen their skills in environmental and climate protection issues and to promote commitment to environmental and climate protection. Volunteers carry out their activities with organisations that are primarily active in the fields of environmental protection, nature conservation, species protection, animal welfare, conservation of biodiversity or in sustainable development and awareness raising. Voluntary work can last between 6 and 12 months, and here too it is possible to have a 10-month civil service credited.

- **Memorial Service**

Participants in a memorial service carry out their voluntary activities at a Holocaust memorial site (in Austria or abroad). The activities include Lectures at universities and schools, organised guided tours of the memorial sites, interviews with Holocaust witnesses, documentation of their experiences and memories. The aims of this service are educational and outreach work, awareness raising, scientific processing, work with victims' associations and surviving victims and the preservation of the memory of the victims of National Socialism. The requirements for participation are the same as for the FSJ.

²⁵ <http://www.freiwilligenweb.at/sonderformen/freiwilliges-sozialjahr-im-inland>

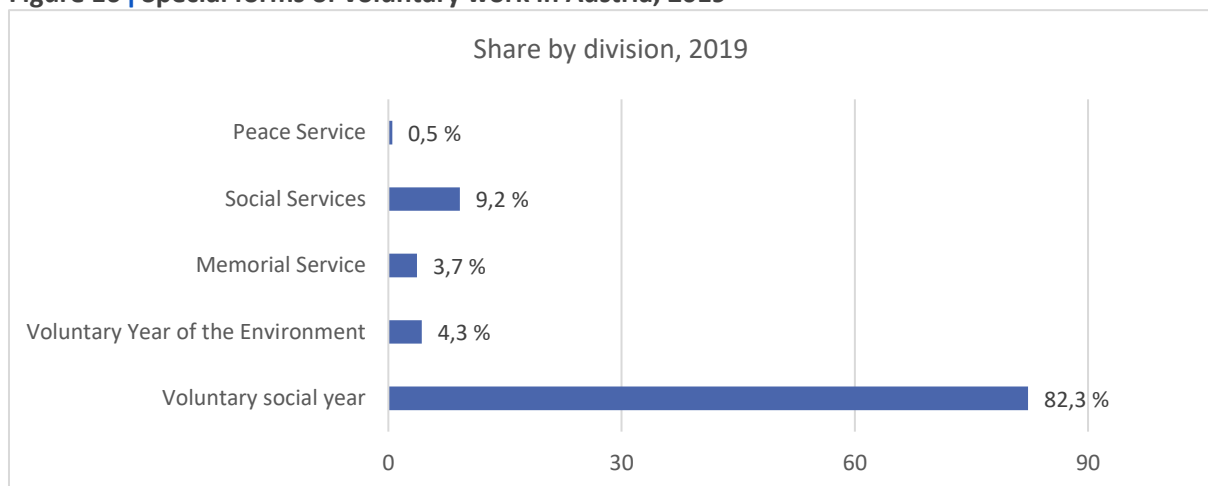
- **Social service abroad**

In any case, the participants of the social service exercise their voluntary work abroad in order to contribute to the economic and social development of the respective country. In doing so, they develop their social and intercultural skills and their social commitment is also strengthened. Possible areas of work in the social service are: education, awareness-raising work, scientific background analyses, child and youth care, care of the disabled, care of people affected by violence, care of refugees, displaced persons and the homeless, care of the elderly, involvement in the construction or restoration of infrastructure and participation in adult education. The requirements are similar to those above (minimum age 17 years, no completed vocational training required, duration: 6 to 12 months, possibility of crediting for community service).

- **Peace service abroad**

The aim of the peace service abroad is to contribute to securing peace in crisis areas. Participants complete 150 hours of training and receive continuous pedagogical support during the programme. They spend 34 hours a week in areas such as education or participation in the construction or restoration of infrastructure. The peace service lasts 6 to 12 months, depending on the agreement.

Figure 16 | Special forms of voluntary work in Austria, 2019



Source: BMSGPK ²⁶

In 2019, more than 80% of the volunteers engaged in specific areas in Austria took part in the Voluntary Social Year. This form is thus largely the most popular among these special forms, followed by the

²⁶ Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz - 3. Bericht zum freiwilligen Engagement in Österreich (2019) - [Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection - 3rd Report on Volunteering in Austria (2019)]

Social Service with 8.1%, the Peace Service and the Voluntary Environmental Year with a participation rate of about 4%. The Peace Service was chosen by a total of 6 people and has a participation rate of less than 1%.

Legal framework

In Austria, the framework conditions for formal volunteering are regulated by the Federal Act on the Promotion of Voluntary Work (FreiwG) 2012²⁷²⁸

This Federal Act

- regulates the framework conditions for formal voluntary activities (Voluntary Social Year, Voluntary Environmental Year, Memorial Service, Peace and Social Service Abroad)
- regulates the volunteers' social security and family allowances and allows them to receive pocket money
- allows voluntary organisations to receive financial support from the Recognition Fund for Volunteering under certain conditions
- makes it possible to waive the fees for criminal records certificates for volunteers
- makes it easier to apply for and obtain Austrian citizenship, as proof of at least three years' voluntary work in a non-profit organisation can be required to prove that you have been a member of a non-profit organisation for at least three years before you can be granted Austrian citizenship after six instead of ten years of legal and uninterrupted residence in Austria
- allows volunteer drivers of volunteer fire brigades and rescue organisations with a B driving licence to drive emergency vehicles over 3.5 t after appropriate training and an internal examination

The provinces of Burgenland, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Tyrol, Vorarlberg and Vienna have contributed to improving the legal framework for volunteers. In these provinces, volunteers are covered by the provincial liability and accident insurance or an appropriate insurance solution. The Volunteers Act 2012 fundamentally changed the framework conditions for voluntary work in Austria and contributed to facilitating the implementation of voluntary activities in an organised framework. In addition, the Austrian government has drawn up an educational guideline to ensure the training of volunteers at a

²⁷ Das Bundesgesetz zur Förderung von freiwilligem Engagement (Freiwilligengesetz – FreiwG, BGBl I Nr. 17/2012 idgF) [The Federal Act on the Promotion of Voluntary Work]

²⁸ <https://www.freiwilligenweb.at/freiwilliges-engagement/rechtliche-rahmenbedingungen/>

high and uniform level. The proposed learning material can be used free of charge by voluntary organisations in their training courses.²⁹

The Austrian Volunteer Council is legally anchored in the Volunteer Act. The objectives of the Austrian Voluntary Council include the recognition and enhancement of voluntary activities of civil society in all their diversity as a supporting pillar of the community. Furthermore, in the fulfilment of its tasks the Voluntary Council serves to improve the framework conditions for voluntary activities. The Council is now in its 2nd term of office, between 2018-2022. The Council compiles an official volunteer report on the current situation of voluntary activities in Austria, the last report dates from 2019.³⁰

In order to give special recognition and enhance the value of voluntary work, the Voluntary Work Act created a recognition fund for voluntary work. The fund offers means and opportunities to promote and honour special and exceptional voluntary work. This financial contribution can be applied for those activities or initiatives which promote the further development and sustainability of voluntary work in Austria. Both individuals and legal entities can apply for the grant. Individuals may apply for a maximum of EUR 1,000, legal entities for a maximum of EUR 15,000.³¹

The Voluntary Service Act requires voluntary organisations to issue proof of their activities to volunteers within 6 months of completing a voluntary activity at the latest. This **proof of voluntary activity** includes not only the tasks carried out, but also their nature and the period of time as well as the skills and competences learned in the process. This strongly emphasises the relevance of informal learning. Volunteers can include this certificate in their CV to improve their chances on the labour market. The certificate is also available online in a web application.³²

In addition to the voluntary programmes, there are numerous other opportunities available in Austria for interested volunteers who would like to try their hand at volunteering. These are organised and coordinated by **volunteer centres**. In the volunteer centres, experts inform interested volunteers about the possible positions, advise them, help with the selection and offer their support in case of questions and problems. The centres form a bridge between the volunteers and the organisations, as they collect the organisations' requirements towards volunteers and practically bring together demand

²⁹ Sozialministerium (2017) - Leitfaden für Curricula von Lehrgängen für Verantwortliche in der Arbeit mit Freiwilligen [Ministry of Social Affairs (2017) - Guide to the curricula of courses for those responsible for working with volunteers]

³⁰ Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz - 3. Bericht zum freiwilligen Engagement in Österreich (2019) - [Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection - 3rd Report on Volunteering in Austria (2019)]

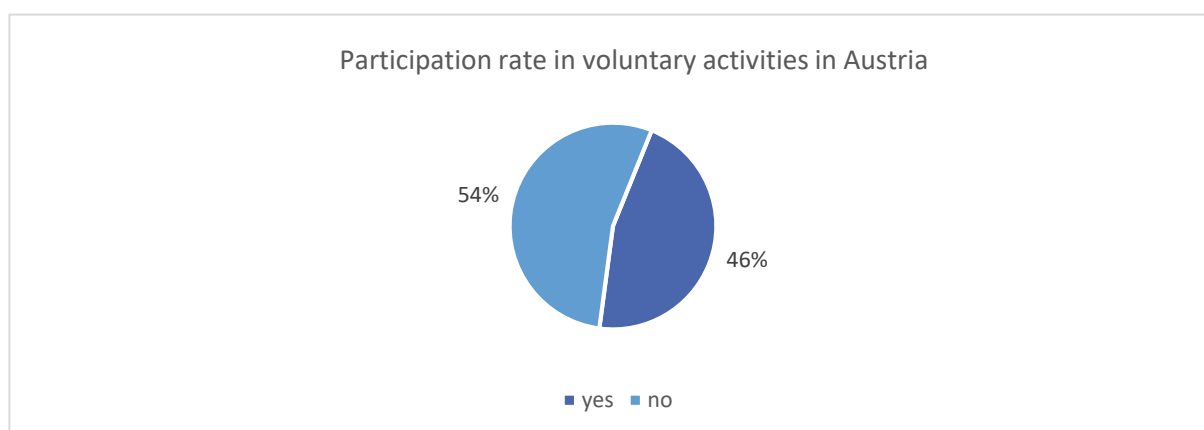
³¹ <https://www.freiwilligenweb.at/freiwilliges-engagement/anerkennungsfonds/>

³² <https://www.freiwilligenweb.at/freiwilliges-engagement/freiwilligen-nachweis/>

and supply. The centres also coordinate the training of volunteers and run their own projects. They also help to publicise and disseminate voluntary activities, thereby increasing the recognition of volunteering in society.

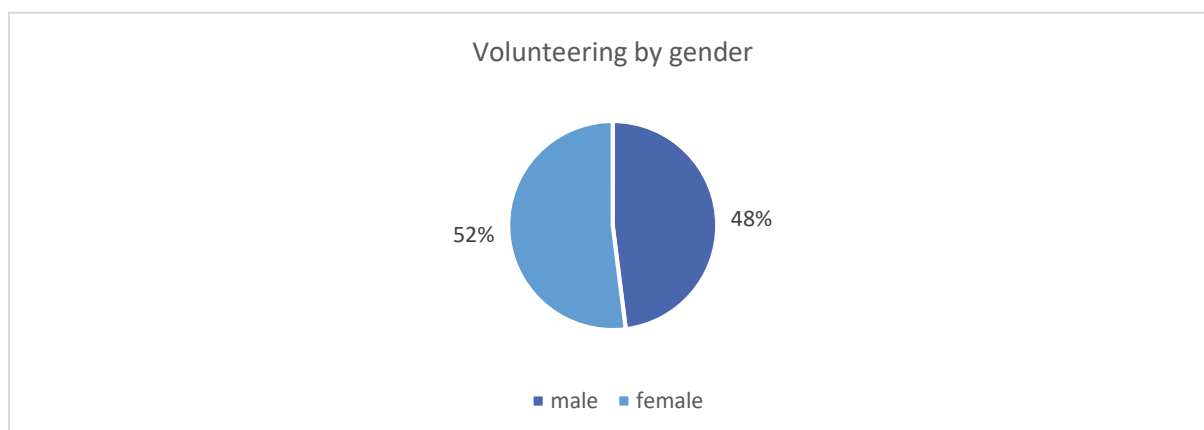
The Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection regularly issues a report on voluntary work in Austria. The current document from 2019 presents the latest data on voluntary work and examines in detail the socio-demographic factors of volunteers. The data in the report is based on the findings of the 2016 IFES report, which states that in 2016 46% of the Austrian population claimed to be engaged in some form of voluntary activity, i.e. about half of the population. The proportion by gender is similar. The participation rates of women and men do not differ significantly.

Figure 17 | Participation rate in voluntary activities in Austria, 2016



Source: IFES

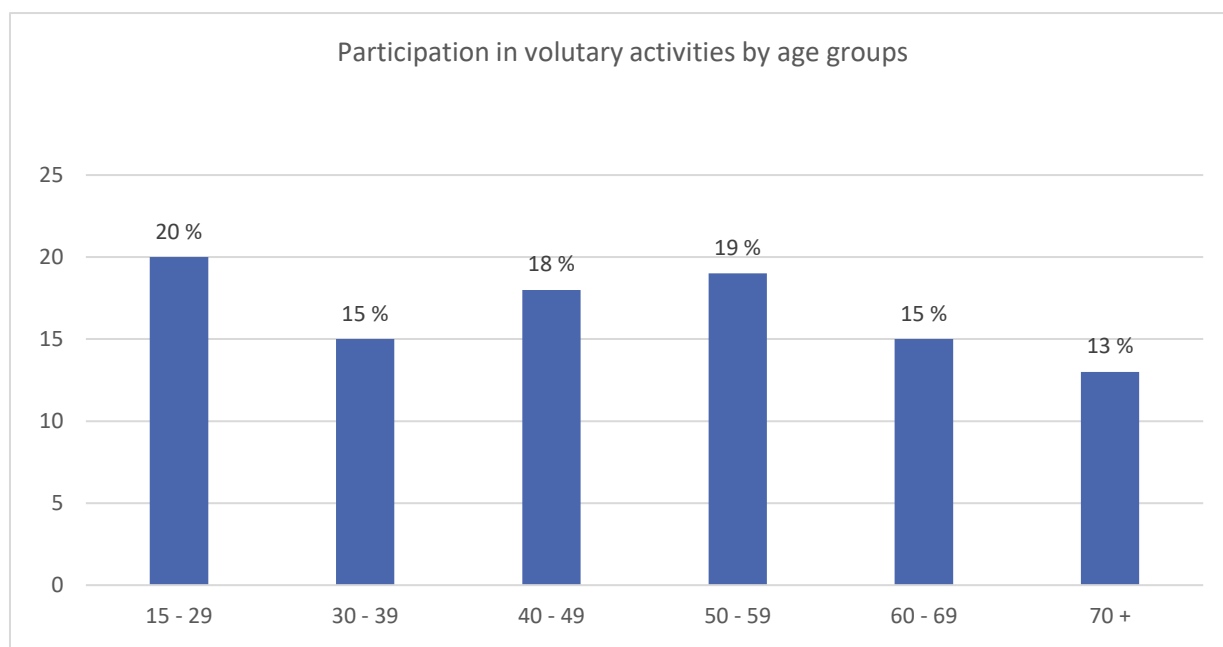
Figure 18 | Volunteering by gender, 2016



Source: IFES

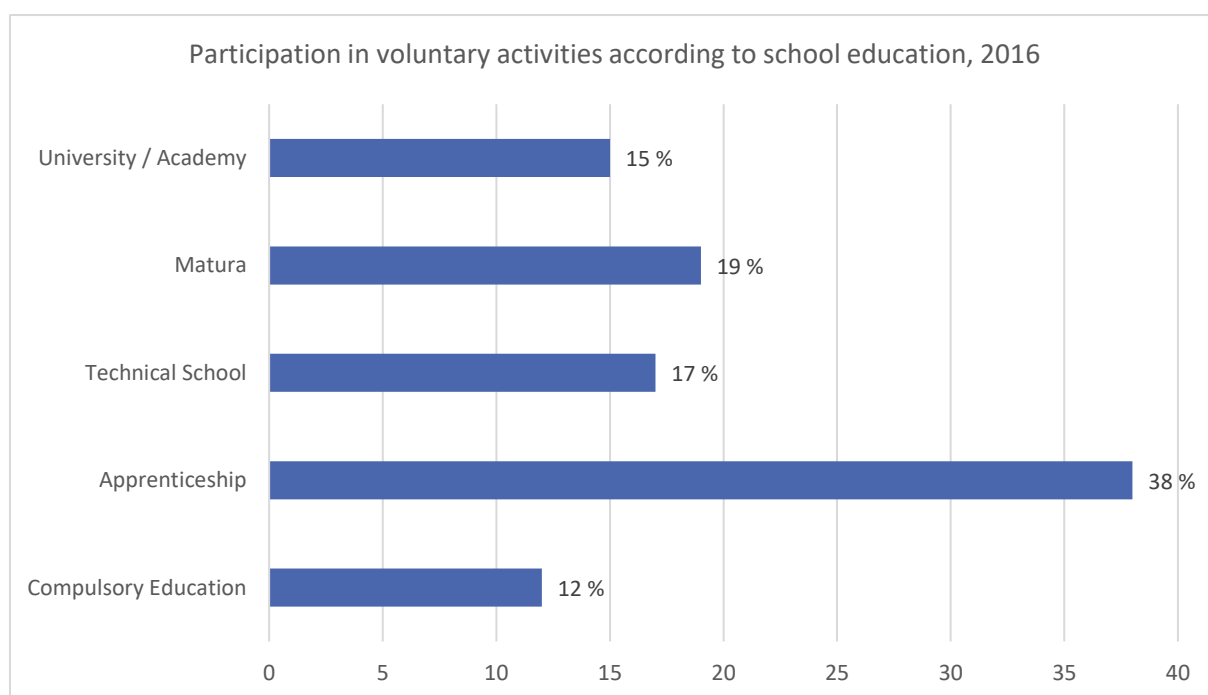
Participation in voluntary activities by age group is high for all groups, but young people under 30 and those aged 50-59 are among the most active groups. In principle, there are no major differences between the age groups, only for those over 70, the proportion is slightly lower, remaining at 13%.

Figure 19 | Participation in voluntary activities by age groups, 2016



Source: IFES

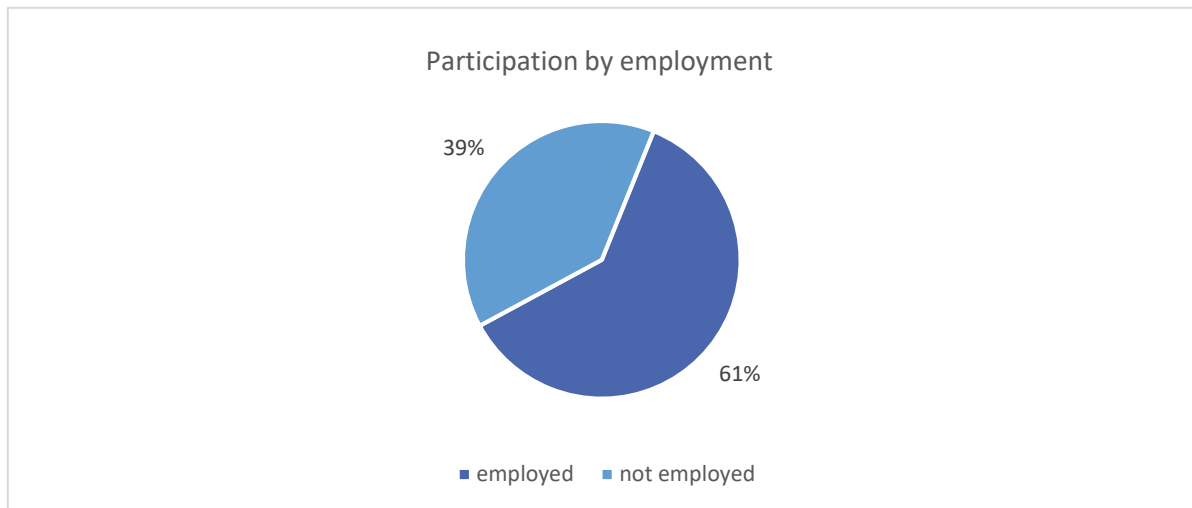
Figure 20 | Participation rate in voluntary activities according to school education, 2016



Source: IFES

Participation in voluntary activities after formal school leaving is also interesting. Here the number of volunteers with a vocational school leaving certificate is exceptionally high at almost 40%. By contrast, the commitment of people with compulsory schooling and university degrees is again very low. A look at voluntary activities by employment rate shows that more than 60% of volunteers are employed.

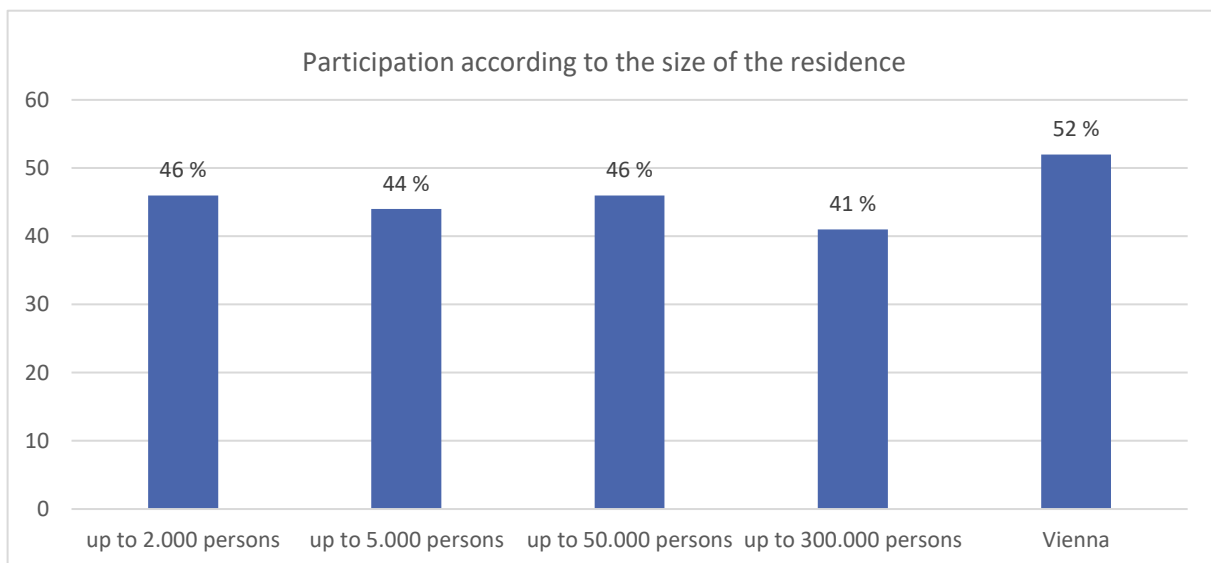
Figure 21 | Participation by employment, 2016



Source: IFES

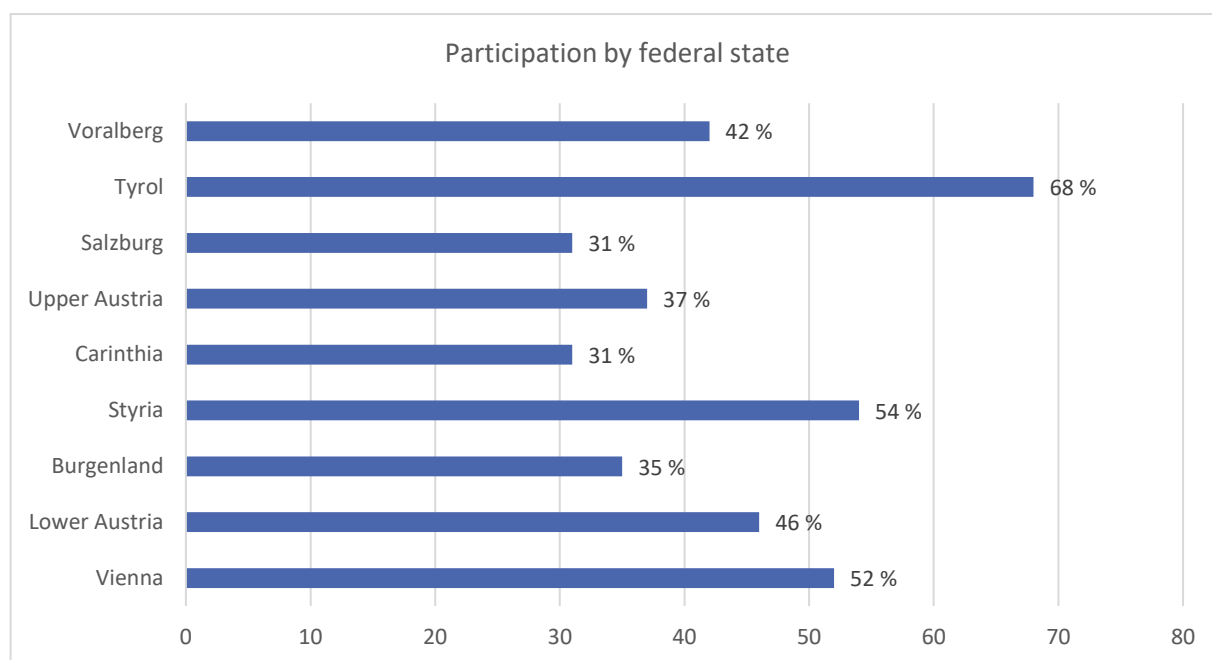
By residence, the participation in Austria is about 45%. In Vienna, participation is slightly higher, while in other cities and smaller municipalities, volunteers are almost equally active. By region, volunteers are most active in Tyrol with 68%, followed by Styria and Vienna. Voluntary involvement is lowest in Carinthia and in Salzburg.

Figure 22 | Participation in voluntary activities by size of residence, 2016



Source: IFES

Figure 23 | Participation in voluntary activities by federal state, 2016



Source: IFES

Framework conditions for volunteering in Hungary

The United Nations (UN) initiative, the "International Year of Volunteers 2001", has made a significant contribution to establishing the institutional framework for volunteering in Hungary. Hungary actively participated in this initiative, with the result that since then the government has attached increasing importance to the dissemination and recognition of volunteering.

In 2002, the Volunteer Centre Foundation (ÖKA) was founded³³ through the cooperation of 5 non-profit organisations. Since 2004, the foundation has been a member of the European Volunteer Centre network, and its main objectives include the development, dissemination, and institutionalisation of volunteering in Hungary. The initiative of the ÖKA also influenced an important measure of the government, the Non-Profit Act on Volunteering 2005 LXXXVIII³⁴. The Voluntary Work Act institutionalised voluntary work and created the legal basis for voluntary work.³⁵

³³ <http://www.oka.hu/cikkek/toertenetuenk-0>

³⁴ 2005. évi LXXXVIII. Törvény a közérdekű önkéntes tevékenységről [Act on Voluntary Activities in the Public Interest] <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a0500088.tv>

³⁵ Nemzeti Önkéntes Stratégia 2012-2020 - 1. melléklet az 1068/2012. (III.20.) Korm. Határozathoz [National Volunteering Strategy 2012-2020 - Annex 1 to 1068/2012 (III.20.) Government Decision].

The law

- defines the term "voluntary activity"
- introduces the obligation for volunteers to register
- determines the content and form of the documentation of a legal relationship
- defines the possible activities of volunteers
- regulates the possibilities of remuneration that can be paid to volunteers
- defines the skills expected of the volunteers

According to the law, from the age of 10, any person can carry out voluntary activities that are appropriate to their age and physical or spiritual development. The volunteer organisations are responsible for reimbursing the costs they incur in the course of carrying out voluntary work, such as travel costs, accommodation, insurance, meals and the equipment needed to carry out the work safely (clothing, protective equipment, tools). A volunteer organisation can also fund the training necessary to carry out the voluntary activity in question. The number of hours of work, rest breaks, location and content of the activity in question are agreed by contract between the host organisation and the volunteer. The host organisation can be a self-governing body, a civil society, a religious association, a social institution, an educational establishment, a library or even an archive. The Act laid down the legal basis for voluntary and voluntary activities, thus initiating the dissemination and recognition of the idea of voluntary work in Hungary.

Projects carried out under the Operational Programme for Social Renewal (TÁMOP) on volunteering also contributed to the spread of volunteering. Through these projects, society became more open and sensitive to voluntary activities, volunteering became more popular and the infrastructural basis for volunteering was created. The TÁMOP projects have created county-level volunteer centres that carry out volunteering programmes, taking into account regional habits and needs. In addition, the National Volunteer Centre was created, which is responsible for the coordination of volunteer centres at county level. Since 2009, more and more TÁMOP projects on the subject of volunteering have been initiated with the aim of spreading the good image of volunteering and motivating the population to volunteer. Branch offices for volunteers were established, which enabled smaller communities to carry out voluntary activities.³⁶

³⁶ Nemzeti Önkéntes Stratégia 2012-2020 - 1. melléklet az 1068/2012. (III.20.) Korm. Határozathoz [National Volunteering Strategy 2012-2020 - Annex 1 to 1068/2012 (III.20.) Government Decision].

National voluntary strategies also contribute to securing the institutional framework of volunteering. In 2006, the Austrian Federal Agency for Cooperation (ÖKA) founded the Hungarian Volunteering Development Strategy for the period 2007-2017,³⁷ which describes the current situation of volunteering in Hungary. It also sets out 7 strategic objectives, including the development of infrastructure, better networking of voluntary organisations and the promotion of intergenerational cooperation. These objectives were also linked to individual measures of the different sectors, and a SWOT analysis was also carried out to examine the strengths and weaknesses of volunteering in Hungary.

On the occasion of the European Year of Volunteering in 2011, the Hungarian government announced the elaboration of a national volunteering strategy, which was completed in 2012 and published in the 32nd edition of the Hungarian Official Journal. The National Volunteering Strategy 2012-2020 defines the concept of volunteering, analyses the current situation of volunteering in Hungary and presents in detail the objectives of volunteering. The objectives of the strategy up to 2020 include developing the culture of volunteering, integrating people with special needs, increasing the knowledge of volunteers, developing the infrastructural and legal framework and creating a network that motivates people to volunteer.³⁸

The National Volunteer Council (NÖT) was founded³⁹ in September 2016 to promote volunteering. The task of the NÖT is to promote volunteering, to develop infrastructure related to volunteering, to coordinate volunteer programmes, or to evaluate government measures and draft laws and to prepare proposals. The Council meets three times a year, and its members work free of charge.⁴⁰

In addition to the dissemination of volunteering, the professional training of volunteer organisations has become increasingly important. Thus the ÖKA founded the ÖKA training programme, which prepares volunteer organisations to receive and coordinate volunteers accordingly.

Since 2009 the prize for voluntary commitment, also initiated by the ÖKA, has been awarded annually in the following categories: Volunteer of the Year, Volunteer of the Year Programme, Corporate Volunteer of the Year Programme. The Audience Award for the Social Initiative of the Year has been in

³⁷ http://www.unp.hu/sites/default/files/imuk/pdf/a_magyarorszagi_onkentesseg_fejlesztesi_strategiaja_2007-2017.pdf

³⁸ Nemzeti Önkéntes Stratégia 2012-2020 - 1. melléklet az 1068/2012. (III.20.) Korm. Határozathoz [National Volunteering Strategy 2012-2020 - Annex 1 to 1068/2012 (III.20.) Government Decision].

³⁹ A Kormány 1503/2016. (IX. 21.) Korm. határozata a Nemzeti Önkéntes Tanácsról megjelent a MAGYAR KÖZLÖNY 2016. évi 142. számának 69963. és 69964. oldalán [the government's decision in the National Volunteer Council was published on pages 69963 and 69964 of MAGYAR KÖZLÖNY No. 142 of 2016].

⁴⁰ <https://www.kormany.hu/hu/emberi-eroforrasok-miniszteriuma/csalad-es-ifjusagugyert-felelos-allamtitkarsag/hirek/a-nemzeti-onkentes-tanacs-segit-terjesztene-az-onkentesseget>

existence since 2012 and the Award for the Pro Bono Initiative of the Year since 2014. In addition to the ÖKA awards, the Pro Voluntarius Award, which was initiated by the Ministry of Human Resources in 2013, is also awarded. The prize can be awarded to individuals, organisations or public institutions for outstanding achievements in the fields of community building, voluntary work and promotion of the common good. The prize is awarded annually on 5 December, the International Day of Volunteers.

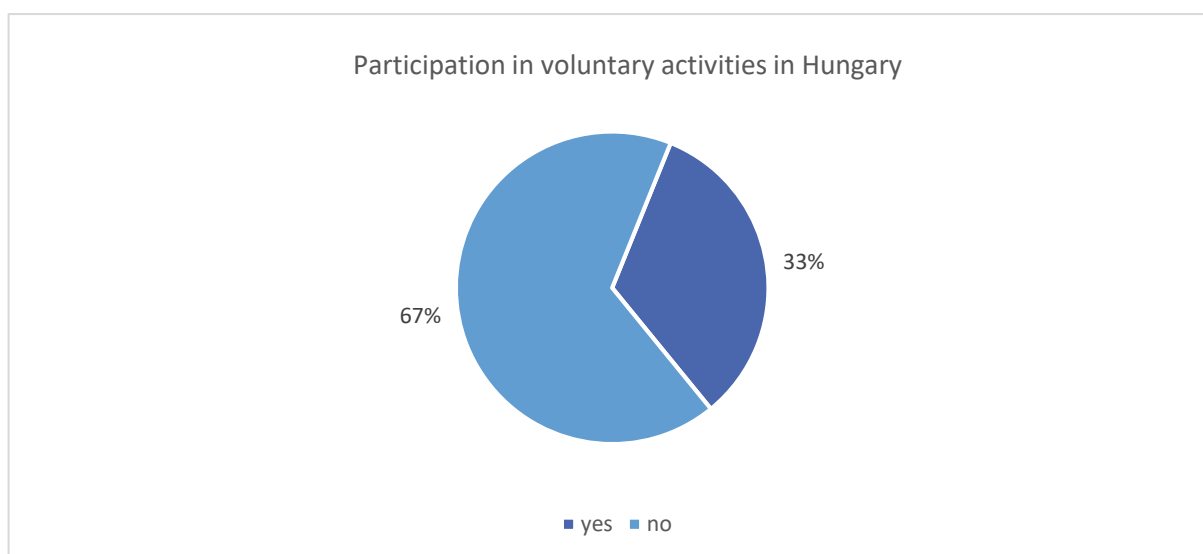
Volunteers in Hungary can put together a volunteer portfolio of their voluntary activities. The portfolio contains the volunteer activities and the experience, knowledge and skills gained. The portfolio consists of 3 parts: Europass CV, confirmations of the voluntary activities and a detailed description of the individual activities. A Volunteer Portfolio can be helpful in the volunteer's job search and helps to build up positive self-esteem and self-confidence.⁴¹

The possibility of charitable work (IKSZ) was introduced in secondary schools in 2012 to spread and strengthen voluntary work and social solidarity. In their last 3 school years, pupils are required to do voluntary work of 50 hours in order to be able to take the school-leaving examination (Matura). It should be emphasised that this activity is compulsory and that failure to do so will result in the pupils not being allowed to take the school leaving examination. Therefore, this service cannot in any case be considered as a voluntary activity. Nevertheless, it plays an important role in education for voluntary activity, as these activities strengthen the sense of solidarity and social responsibility among young people.

The socio-demographic data of volunteers in Hungary was analysed on the basis of statistical data from the first quarter of 2019 from the National Statistical Office (KSH). 33% of the Hungarian population testified that they carry out voluntary activities, 54% of them are women. The participation rate by gender is therefore relatively balanced.

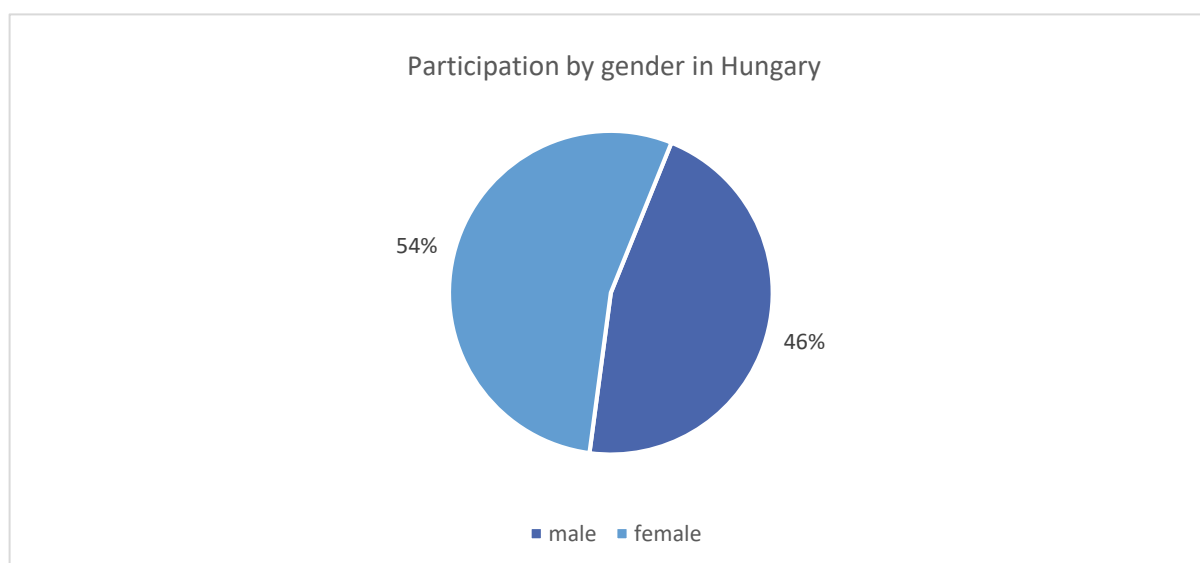
⁴¹ <http://www.onkentes.hu/sites/default/files/attachment/3/okaportfolio1.pdf>

Figure 24 | Participation in voluntary activities in Hungary, 2019



Source: KSH

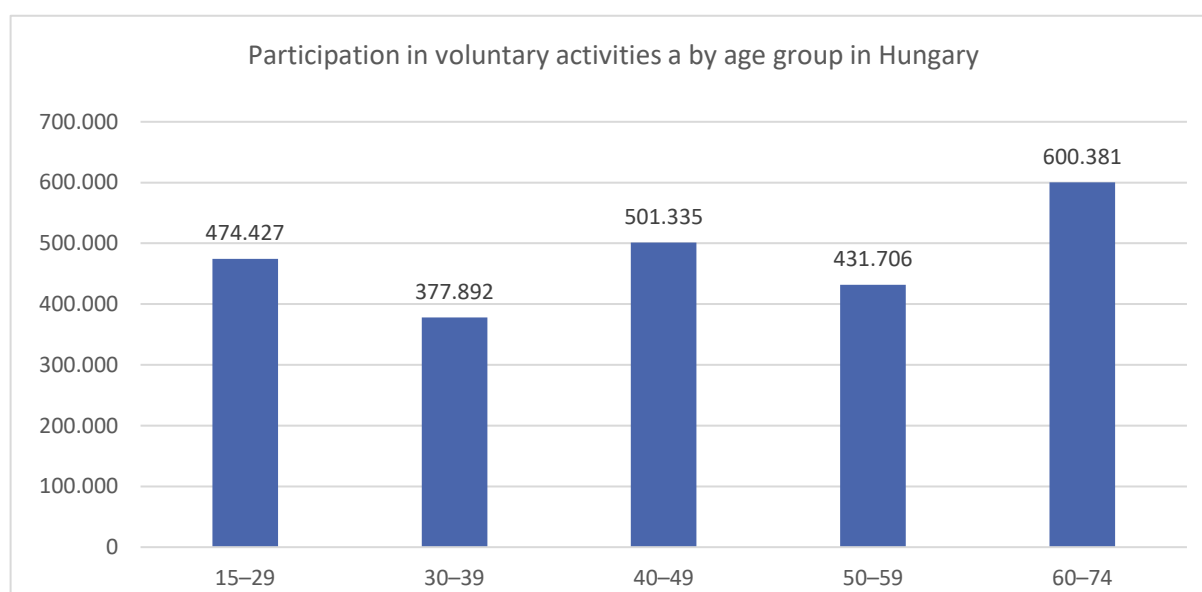
Figure 25 | Participation by gender in Hungary



Source: KSH

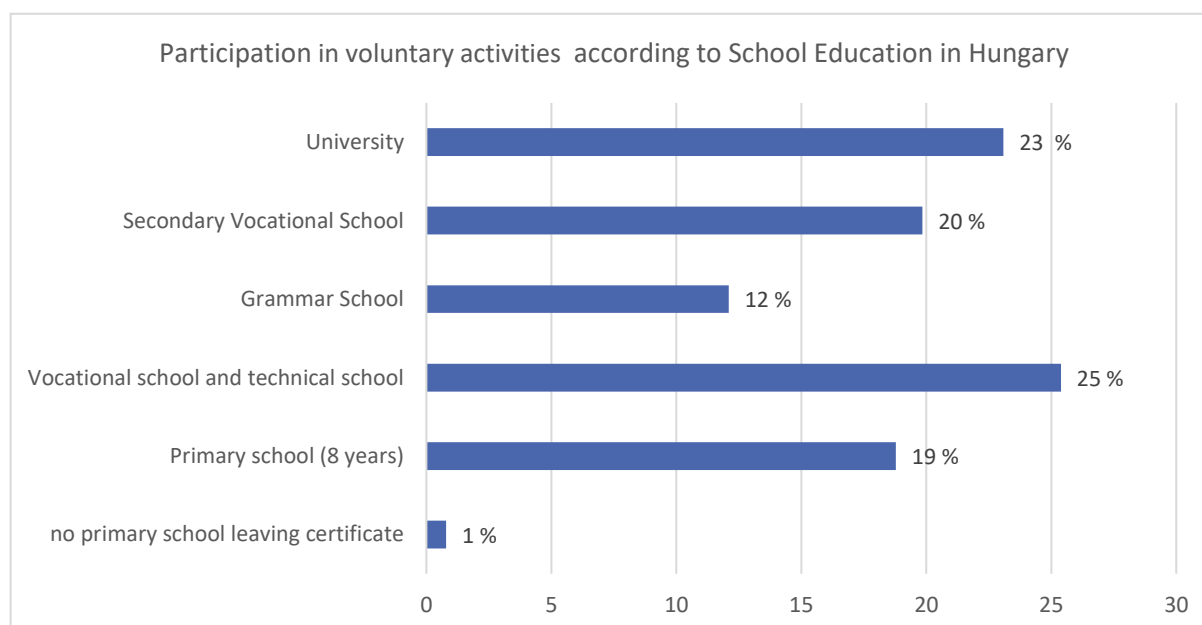
When analysing by age group, it is noticeable that in Hungary the older generation of 60-74 year olds is the most involved in volunteering. The 40-49 age group is also particularly active. In contrast, the age group of 30 years is the least active in terms of volunteering. The participation rate according to school education shows that the highest level of voluntary commitment is found among people with a vocational or technical school qualification, followed by the group of people with a university degree.

Figure 26 | Participation in voluntary activities by age group in Hungary, 2019



Source: KSH

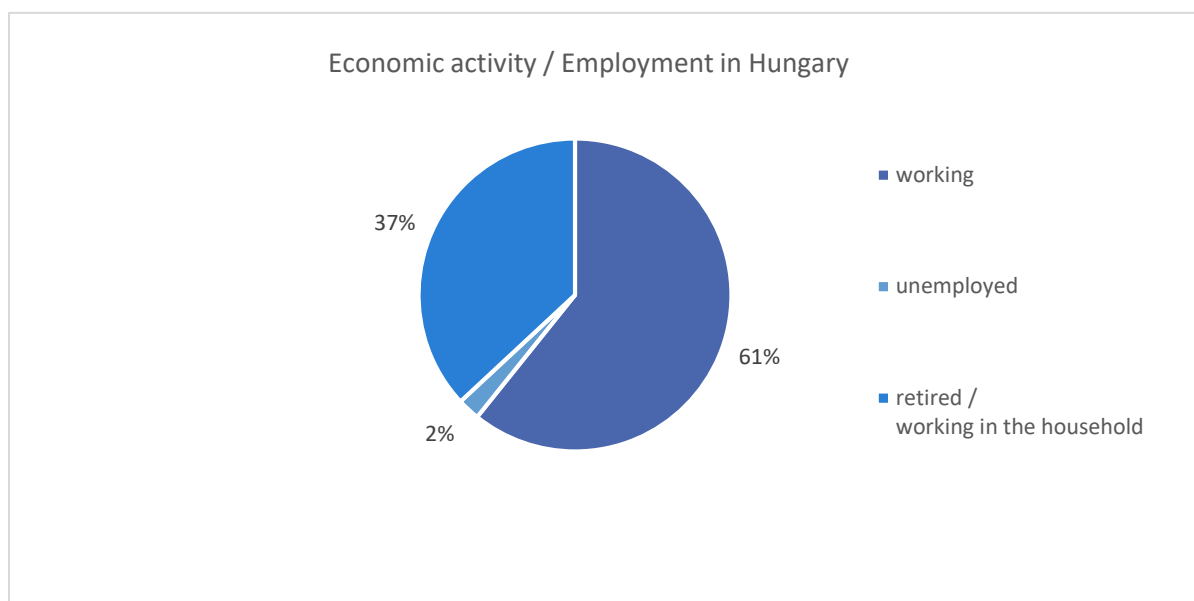
Figure 27 | Participation in voluntary activities after schooling in Hungary, 2019



Source: KSH

61% of the volunteers interviewed are employed and also carry out voluntary activities. Only 2% of volunteers are registered unemployed, while 37% are not employed, i.e. retired or working in the household.

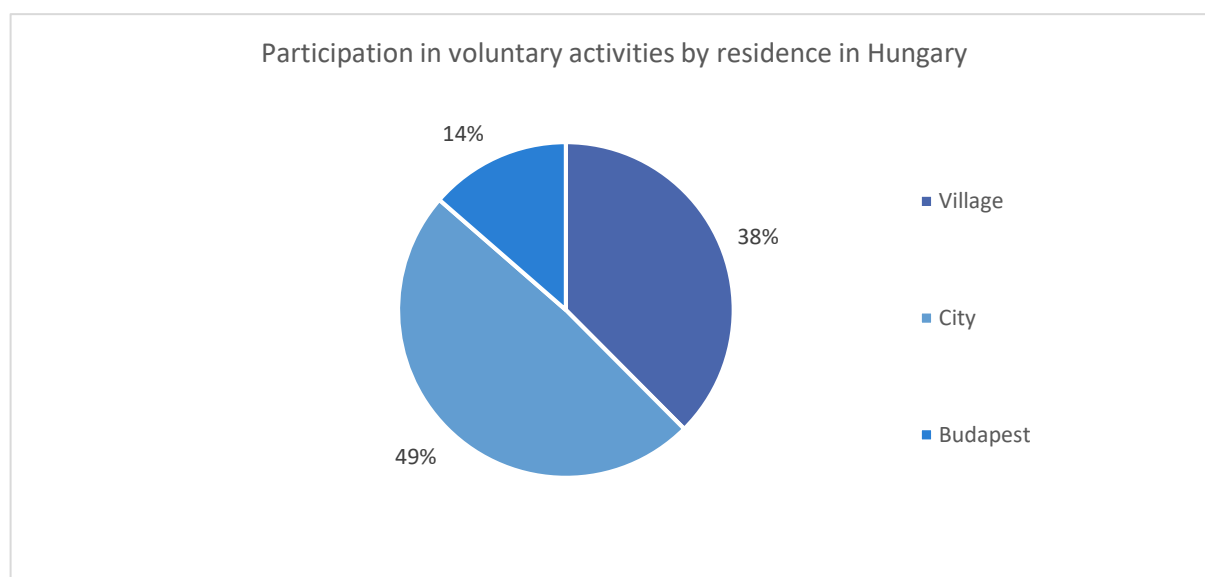
Figure 28 | Participation in voluntary activities by employment in Hungary, 2019



Source: KSH

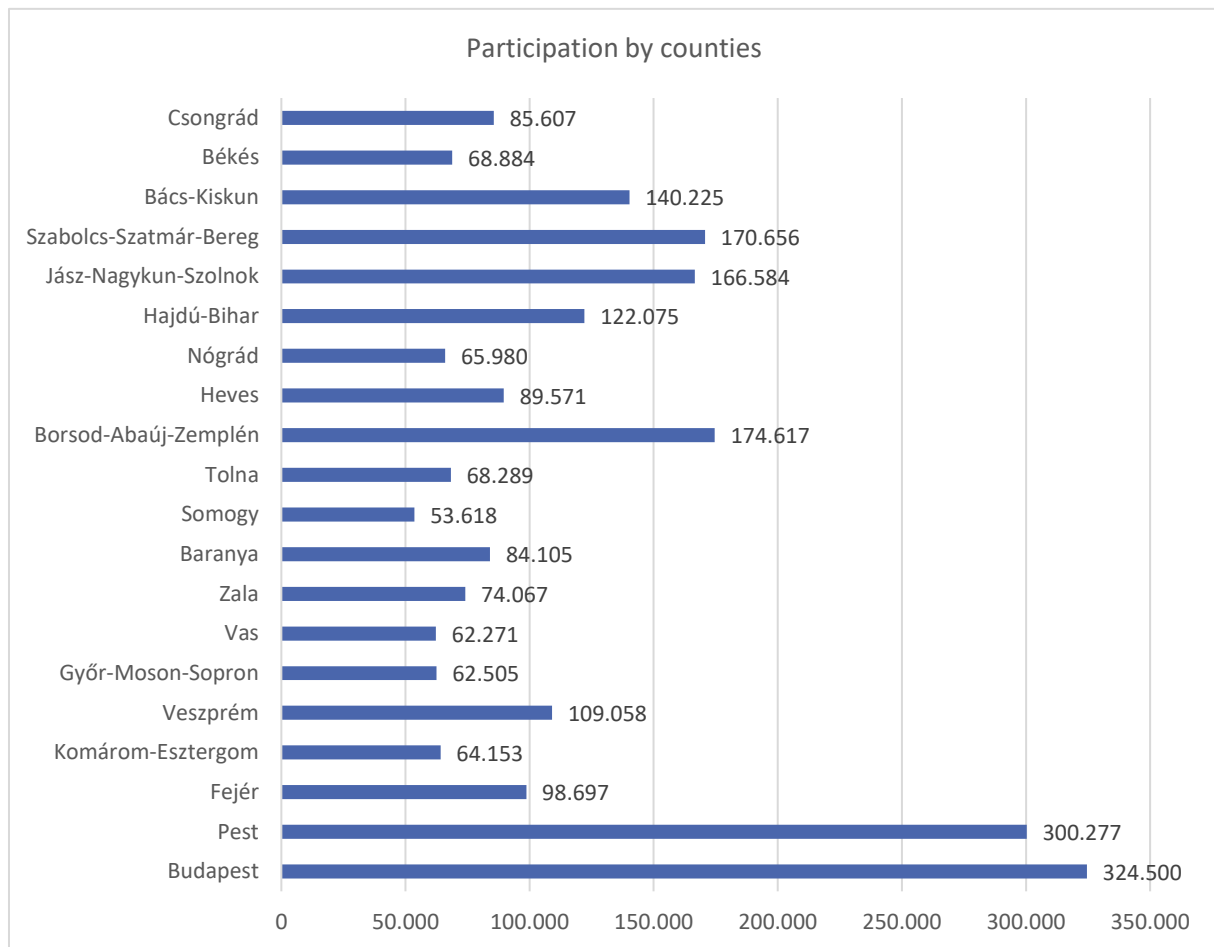
The largest proportion of volunteers, 63% in total, live in cities, most of them in Budapest and Pest County. The smallest proportion, however, is in Somogy County.

Figure 29 | Participation in voluntary activities by residence in Hungary, 2019



Source: KSH

Figure 30 | Number of volunteers by county in Hungary, 2019



Source: KSH

Volunteering and digitisation

When examining volunteering, it is important to look more closely at the impact of digitisation on volunteering in our accelerated and fast-moving times. Digitisation has had a major impact on individuals and society as a whole for many years. Technical developments and their speed are fundamentally changing professional life and the workplace through new technologies. Day after day, new, modern, "smart" tools are appearing which make everyday work easier. For decades, the fixed network telephone, fax machines and letters determined our communication. Today, thanks to the Internet and "smart" devices, we are only a "click" away from each other, and our communication has become much easier and faster. We can now reach each other within seconds and see each other no matter where we are. New technologies show us the way when we get lost or remind us of appointments and provide instant information on any subject.

Digitisation also offers a number of advantages for the organisation, coordination and provision of voluntary activities. The use of digital media greatly simplifies the process of arranging voluntary activities, as online platforms make it easier and quicker for volunteers and people in need to meet spontaneously and can be done without the involvement of voluntary organisations.

Before the age of digitisation, supply and demand were usually linked locally and informally by a voluntary organisation.⁴² Today, thanks to social media and special technical tools, people in need can be networked with volunteers in a new and modern way. A further advantage of digitisation is that the information to be disseminated can reach a wider audience via smartphones and various applications, and also reaches the respective target groups (volunteers and people in need) in a targeted and filtered manner. Today, there are already numerous apps available which function as a supporting tool and with the help of which voluntary assistance can be provided online.

"Be my eyes" is one such application, which was developed for blind and visually impaired people. Through the app, volunteer sighted people make their vision available to blind or visually impaired people via a video call and can help the person in need to cope with various tasks (recognition of colours, cooking, etc.). The ⁴³list of applications to support volunteer activities is quite long, most of them connect the volunteer directly with the person in need, such as a trained first aider with the injured person at the scene of the accident, or lonely people on the periphery through videocalls with volunteer readers.

However, the Internet and digital applications not only function as tools in the organisation of voluntary activities, but also provide a useful interface for these activities. ⁴⁴Today, some voluntary activities are carried out almost unnoticed on online platforms, as, for example, individual users can already contribute voluntarily to the dissemination of a topic by sharing news. A simple "like" can already be enough to attract attention. Sharing events on digital social media can also help in finding volunteers.

⁴² Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz - 3. Bericht zum freiwilligen Engagement in Österreich (2019) [Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection - 3rd Report on Voluntary Work in Austria (2019)]

⁴³ <https://www.bemyeyes.com/>

⁴⁴ Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz - 3. Bericht zum freiwilligen Engagement in Österreich (2019) [Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection - 3rd Report on Voluntary Work in Austria (2019)]

In summary, digital media and digitisation can ensure easy, quick and free access to relevant information and have a good broad impact thus increasing the flexibility of volunteering and making volunteering itself much easier and simpler.⁴⁵

Social benefits

The benefits of volunteering are undisputed from a societal perspective, as it is of particular importance to all levels of society. Volunteering has a positive impact on the beneficiaries of volunteering and has a major impact on the volunteer and on society as a whole. Volunteering has a positive effect on the members of a community. Irrespective of the size of the community, it also has a positive impact on the upbringing and socialisation of children, provides support for young people starting out on their careers or young unemployed people and can help to counteract the loneliness and isolation of elderly people.⁴⁶ Volunteering therefore has a positive impact on each individual and thus on society as a whole.

In its resolution (10 February 2000), the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) also addressed the overall social benefits of volunteering. According to this resolution, volunteering promotes social inclusion, reduces poverty, contributes to full employment and thus has a positive impact on society, also in economic terms.

On volunteering and its impact on society as a whole, the European Voluntary Service states in its Manifesto for Volunteering in Europe (2006): "Volunteering is a means of social inclusion and integration of people. It contributes to the cohesion of society by promoting trust and solidarity, thereby creating social capital. Volunteering is one of the ways in which people of all nationalities, beliefs, ages and social origins can contribute to positive changes in our societies. Volunteers are important for the implementation of European Union policies, for example in the context of social inclusion policies or development aid. Volunteering is a means of promoting an active and responsible community, which is a central component of European ideals and values such as democracy, solidarity and participation. It is an effective means of reconciliation and restoring relations in divided societies. Through volunteering, people acquire new knowledge and skills such as leadership, communication and organisational skills and put them into practice. They expand their social network and often find

⁴⁵ Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg - Behörde für Arbeit, Soziales, Familie und Integration – Hamburger Engagementstrategie 2019 [Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg - Department of Labour, Social Affairs, Family and Integration - Hamburg Engagement Strategy 2019]

⁴⁶ Salamon & Papp (2012) - Önkéntesség és önszerveződés segítése. Civil ifjúsági munka [Voluntary work and self-organisation. Civil youth work].

paid work later. Volunteering provides the framework for informal and non-formal learning and is therefore a key instrument in the European Union's lifelong learning strategy. The economic value of volunteering and its contribution to gross domestic product is considerable. National macroeconomic statistics should be able to provide accurate information on this".⁴⁷ Volunteering reduces social exclusion, strengthens institutional loyalty, promotes equal opportunities and brings economic benefits at the macro-social level.

The impact of volunteering on individuals is quite extensive. Volunteers acquire new skills during their voluntary activities, gain experience, build up their network, and may even learn about several professions, thereby facilitating their career entry or increasing their success in finding a job. Volunteering also has a positive effect on the development of the individual, as volunteers experience a sense of usefulness and recognition during their work, experience the joy of helping, develop their personality, take responsibility for their actions and strengthen their self-confidence and self-esteem. While carrying out voluntary activities, volunteers gain new experiences and get to know new people or even new cultures. It has been proven that volunteering has a positive effect on physical and mental health. It can reduce stress and depression and help people forget their own problems, or at least look at them from a different angle.⁴⁸ Senior volunteers also benefit from their voluntary activities, as the activities they carry out promote active ageing and help maintain or improve their mental and physical condition.⁴⁹

Overall, it can be said that volunteering contributes to social development, enhances the social skills of individuals, strengthens the sense of solidarity, serves the general interest of the volunteers themselves and also of society and can be used as a measure to solve societal and generational problems.⁵⁰

⁴⁷Manifesto for Volunteering in Europe, European Volunteer Centre (CEV), 2006

⁴⁸ Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz - 3. Bericht zum freiwilligen Engagement in Österreich (2019) - [Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection - 3rd Report on Volunteering in Austria (2019)]

⁴⁹ Salamon & Papp (2012) - Önkéntesség és önszerveződés segítése. Civil ifjúsági munka [Voluntary work and self-organisation. Civil youth work].

⁵⁰ KSH - Önkéntes munka Magyarországon (A Munkaerő-felmérés, 2011. III. negyedévi kiegészítő felvétele) [Voluntary work in Hungary (Labour Force Survey, supplementary survey for the 3rd quarter of 2011)].

3. QUALITY OF LIFE OF ELDERLY PEOPLE

Definition of "age"

Like the concept of volunteering, that of age is not entirely clear. The concept is interpreted differently in different countries and cultures around the world. It is enough to examine the concept of life expectancy and it will immediately become clear why it is difficult to define the concept of age. If a person is already considered old and "out of service" in one society, he or she may belong to the group of active adults in another society. The concept of "age" is difficult to define, not only because of the differences between societies, but also because it can be determined by several criteria. ⁵¹

1. Perspective by age

The easiest and quickest way to determine "age" is probably to use chronological age. Experts do not fully agree on the international level on age. According to the United Nations (UN), age begins at the age of 60; according to the European Union and the European Council, age is considered to start at 65. Nevertheless, it is the recommendation of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and probably the most widely used and accepted way of thinking, which divides the various stages of ageing as follows:

- 50-59 year olds: transition to old age
- 60-74 year olds: young old
- 75-89 year olds: elderly and very elderly
- 90-99 year olds: very old
- 100 year olds and older: long-lived

Age is just a number - that's what people often say. That is precisely why it is important, apart from the chronological aspect, to examine the biological, psychological and sociological activities and physical condition of the individual.

2. Biological perspective

Although biological age is related to calendar age, it is determined on the basis of physical condition. Biological ageing is a natural physiological process, the signs of which occur at different times. Lifestyle, habits and a conscious and healthy lifestyle influence the ageing process.⁵² The

⁵¹ Lampek - Rétsági (2015) - Egészséges Idősödés - Az egészségfejlesztés lehetőségei idős korban [Healthy old age - ways to promote health in old age].

⁵² Sebastian Knell (2017) - Unterschiedliche Modi des Alterns und ihre philosophische [Bewertung Different modes of ageing and their philosophical evaluation]

visible signs of aging, such as changes in posture, wrinkles, greying of the hair, occur at different times and at different ages. Some people's hair greys early, while for others the process starts much later. The occurrence of diseases that lead to a deterioration of the quality of life is also individual for each person. There are also elderly people who say that they have never seen a doctor because they are very healthy. The typical illnesses of old age, such as cardiovascular diseases, diseases of the musculoskeletal system, loss of sight and hearing, affect physical, mental and social performance and thus increase the feeling of aging in each individual.⁵³

3. Psychological perspective

"You are as old as you feel", - is a phrase often used, and the psychological perspective of ageing is exactly that. This aspect refers to the subjective self-assessment of the individual. Psychological age is based on the behaviour and feelings of the individual. An important factor is how one sees oneself or how one wants to be seen by others, as this determines the behaviour and social position of the individual. A person of 80 years of age who works or is active, has plans, and is actively involved in numerous activities can be considered psychologically young.⁵⁴ The psychological criteria determine the age according to the individual assessment of each person.

4. Sociological perspective

While psychological age is determined by the self-assessment of the individual, sociological age reflects the external assessment of the individual, the opinion of the environment on age and the social status of the individual.⁵⁵ The role one plays in society, how active one is, how one is perceived by one's environment is closely related to the value judgement, culture and characteristics of the social norms of the respective society. The social status of elderly people is influenced above all by changes in the family, the environment and the state of health, such as losing one's job, retirement, a possible loss of income, a deterioration in general health, children moving out, the birth of grandchildren, the death of a partner or friends, a change of residence, such as moving to a retirement home.⁵⁶

⁵³ Füzesi, Törőcsik, Lampek, (2013) - Az időskor egészségpszichológiája: tények és trendek [Health sociology in old age: facts and trends].

⁵⁴ Richard W. Besdine, MD (2019) - Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University - Übersicht über Alterserscheinungen [Overview of signs of ageing]

⁵⁵ Rosenmayr (1983) - Die späte Freiheit: das Alter, ein Stück bewusst gelebten Lebens [Late freedom: old age, a piece of consciously lived life]

⁵⁶ Lampek - Rétsági (2015) - Egészséges Idősödés - Az egészségfejlesztés lehetőségei idős korban [Healthy old age - ways to promote health in old age].

So defining age is not easy, we usually only talk about one number, but in reality many other aspects are necessary for the definition.

Definition of quality of life

The notion of "quality of life" and good living conditions is of high relevance today, not only in social science research but also among policy makers. However, the term is also often used colloquially. The concept of quality of life is relatively new, it was first defined in the mid-20th century, and since then it has become increasingly important. One reason for this is sometimes that people are often unhappy, even though they live in economically well-developed countries, and the living conditions of the population are improving as a result of increasing prosperity. It is now clear that the objective of development must not only be economic growth and the satisfaction of material needs (objective indicators), but that great importance must also be attached to well-being and general living situations (subjective elements).⁵⁷ The quality of life can therefore be examined from an objective and subjective approach. There are theories that say that the quality of life can only be measured precisely with objective indicators. The most important objective indicator is resources, i.e. the well-being of a society is measured by the quantity and quality of available resources and material goods. Such resources include income, wealth, professional and social position, status at work, education and social relations. Objective indicators at the macro level are, for example, gross domestic product and other measurable economic indicators. According to other theories, subjective indicators are sufficient to describe the quality of life in a society. The subjective approach leaves the assessment to the individual. It is about one's own personal perception of how satisfied one is with one's own life, lifestyle and quality of life. In essence, subjective quality of life is equivalent to a feeling of happiness, and can be measured by the satisfaction of the individual. And according to a third theory, and the most widely accepted one, we can only get a complete picture of the quality of life in society if we compare and analyse⁵⁸ objective and subjective indicators in equal measure.

The World Health Organisation WHO defines quality of life as follows: "Quality of life is a person's subjective perception of his or her position in life in relation to the culture and value systems in which he or she lives and in relation to his or her goals, expectations, standards and concerns". It is a broadly understood term that includes physical and mental health, the degree of independence, social

⁵⁷ Lampek - Rétsági (2015) - Egészséges Idősödés - Az egészségfejlesztés lehetőségei idős korban [Healthy old age - ways to promote health in old age].

⁵⁸ Utasi (2006) - A szubjektív életminőség forrásai: biztonság és kapcsolatok [Sources of subjective quality of life: security and relationships]

relationships, beliefs and perceptions of one's environment. ⁵⁹To measure the quality of life of an individual or a society, the WHO recommends examining the indicators according to Table 1 below.

Table 1: WHO areas and segments for quality of life surveys (WHO 1997) ⁶⁰

Indicators	Sections between the different areas
	0. general quality of life and general health
1. Physical health	1.1 Energy and fatigue 1.2 Pain and complaints 1.3 Sleep and rest
2. Psychological health	2.1 Body image and appearance 2.2 Negative feelings 2.3 Positive feelings 2.4 Self-confidence 2.5 Thinking, learning, memory, concentration
3. Degree of independence	3.1 Mobility 3.2 Everyday activities 3.3 Dependence on drugs and medical aid 3.4 Ability to work
4. Social contacts	4.1 Personal contacts 4.2 Social support 4.3 Sexual activity
5. Environment	5.1 Financial resources 5.2 Sense of freedom, general and physical security 5.3 Health and social care: access and quality 5.4 Domestic environment 5.5. Ability to acquire new information and skills 5.6 Participation and opportunities for recreation/relaxation 5.7 Physical environment (air pollution, noise, traffic, climate) 5.8 Transport
6. Spirituality / religion / personal faith	6.1. spirituality/religion/personal faith

The figure shows that the quality of life can be made up of numerous factors, and these can span several areas of life. Overall, quality of life is a dynamic, multifaceted and complex concept, which is characterised by objective, subjective, positive and negative factors at macro and micro level. ⁶¹

The definition of age, as explained above, is relatively complex and is described by three main disciplines: sociology, psychology and health sciences. In all three fields, enormous research results have accumulated which, independently of each other, deal mainly with the concept of quality of life.

⁵⁹ World Health Organization - Division of Mental Health and Prevention of Substance Abuse (1997) - WHOQOL Measuring Quality of Life

⁶⁰ World Health Organization - Division of Mental Health and Prevention of Substance Abuse (1997) - WHOQOL Measuring Quality of Life

⁶¹ Mollenkopf - Walker (2007) - Quality of Life in Old Age - International and Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives

One of the major challenges for the future is to bring this knowledge together and develop a single index of quality of life in old age.⁶²

The quality of life decreases increasingly with ageing. At the very least, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain it, as ageing can often lead to health problems or even chronic illnesses that have a negative impact on the well-being of the individual. Physical and/or mental illness affects elderly people and they often need external help and support to maintain their usual quality of life. The effects of ageing and changes in health status are often associated with a loss of independence and autonomy. Elderly people are then no longer able to look after themselves and need help. This often goes hand in hand with a feeling of isolation, as family relationships become increasingly rare and social contacts diminish. Elderly people often withdraw into their own homes and find it difficult to convince themselves to leave and go outside. People who have recently been discharged from hospital, lost their partner, are socially isolated, have a minimal income, have no children or are disabled have a particularly difficult time. In such difficult life situations, elderly people are dependent on the help of family members, neighbours or friends in order to maintain their quality of life as much as possible. Nowadays there is often the problem that family and friends are not present or cannot provide active help. In such cases, the supporting activity of volunteers is very useful and extremely important, as their work can help to improve and maintain the quality of life of elderly people.⁶³

⁶² Kovács (2007) - Életminőség - boldogság - stratégiai tervezés [Quality of life - happiness - strategic planning]

⁶³ Dr Majercsik Eszter PhD - Életminőség és közérzet az élet alkonyán [Quality of life and well-being at dusk]

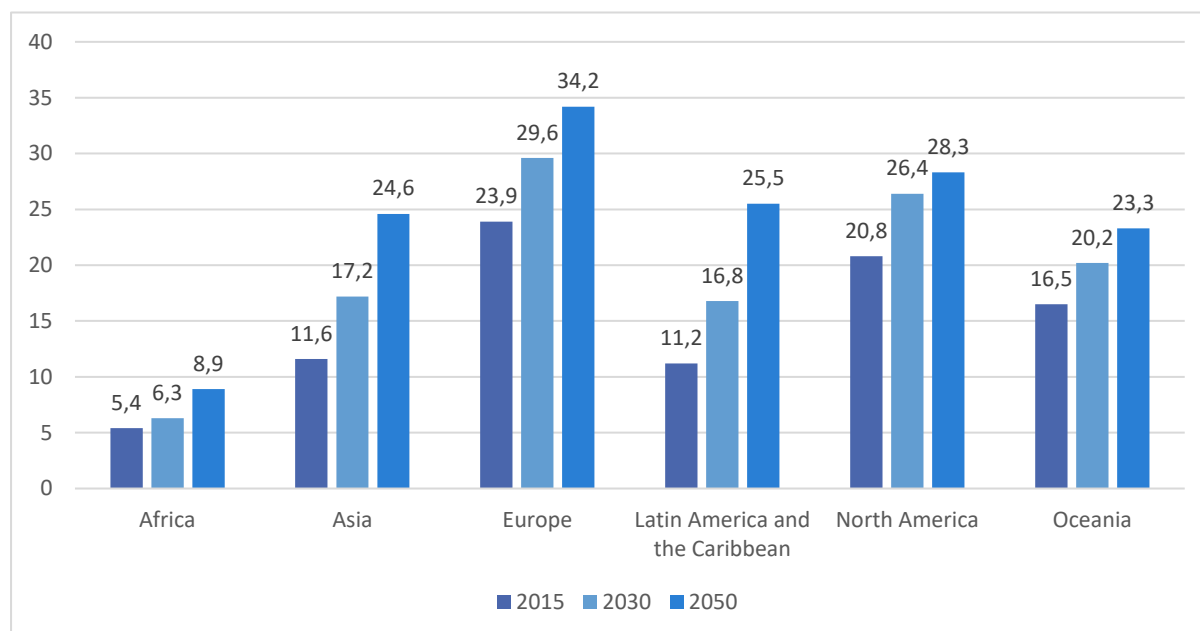
4. AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Definition of age-friendly communities

Before defining age-friendly communities, it is worth taking a closer look at the circumstances that led to the concept being formed in the first place, to its inclusion in national policies and to the increasing attention it is receiving from society.

It is well known that the population of Europe (and of the world) is ageing rapidly. The number of elderly people is increasing and the proportion of young people is decreasing. The reasons for this could be analysed in detail, but one reason is certainly that life expectancy in industrialised countries is increasing. According to a 2004 UN forecast, 22% of the world's population and 27.9% of the population in Europe will be over 65 by 2050.⁶⁴ In 2015, the UN examined the proportion of people over 60 in another study.⁶⁵ According to these results, about 24% of the population in Europe was over 60 in 2015, and this figure will rise to about 34% by 2050. This figure is surprisingly high, because in thirty years' time every third person in Europe would be part of the older generation, and more and more people would reach the age of 80, 90 or even 100.

Figure 31 | Distribution of the population aged 60 and over by geographical region worldwide, 2015, or forecast for 2030 and 2050



Source: United Nations Council for Economic and Social Affairs (2015) - World Population Ageing Report 2015

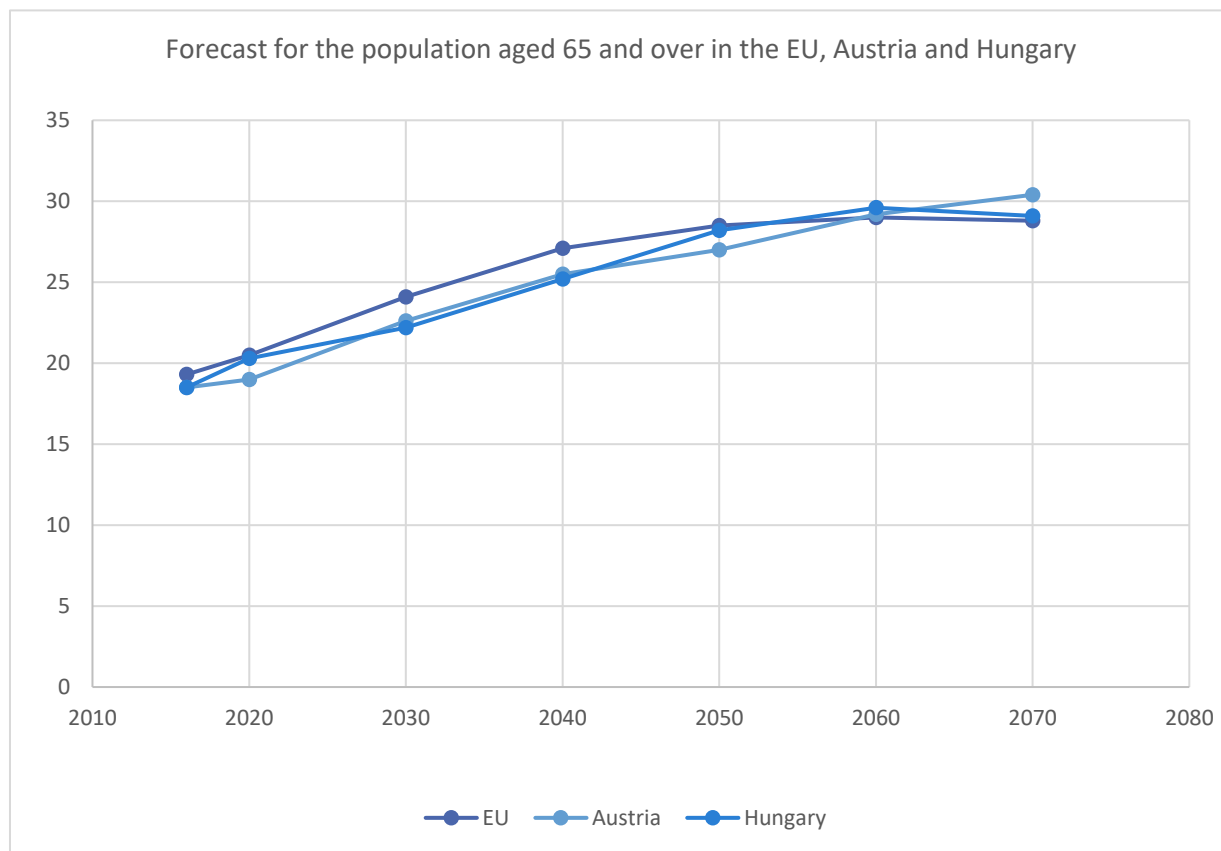
⁶⁴ United Nations Population Fund (2004) - State of world population 2004

https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/swp04_eng.pdf

⁶⁵ United Nations Economic and Social Council (2015) - World Population Ageing Report

https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/ageing/WPA2015_Report.pdf

Figure 32 | Forecast of population aged 65 and over in the EU, Austria and Hungary



Source: Eurostat 2015

The structures within families are changing, more and more elderly people are forced to live alone and in many cases, due to emigration, they cannot rely on the immediate help of family members, although they actually need regular care and support.

The process of urbanisation is very detrimental to the older generation as more and more people move to the cities. There are more and more cars on the streets, noise and air pollution are high. In order for cities to provide a safe, healthy and comfortable life for elderly people, transport concepts need to be revised and made barrier-free (e.g. lifts in subways, wide pavements) and social services need to be reorganised. Above all, however, the public needs to be made aware and sensitised to this problem. The population should also be encouraged and motivated to work together within the generations.

For these reasons, the World Health Organisation (WHO) initiated the programme "Global Age-friendly Cities"⁶⁶ in 2005. Through the project, the term "age-friendly" became widespread. The programme

⁶⁶ https://www.who.int/ageing/projects/age_friendly_cities/en/

defined in detail what is meant by age-friendly communities: an age-friendly community promotes the social activity of elderly people and ensures their healthy wellbeing. In addition, an age-friendly community is open, safe, supportive and delays the development of disease. An age-friendly environment provides opportunities for recovery and recreation and gives elderly people the chance not to miss out on their usual and important things in old age.⁶⁷

In 2007, the World Health Organisation (WHO) published a checklist⁶⁸ with the following 8 categories, as important key points that are relevant when designing an age-friendly environment This is the so-called WHO flower.⁶⁹

Figure 33 | WHO-Flower



⁶⁷ <https://www.who.int/ageing/projects/age-friendly-environments/en/>

⁶⁸ WHO (2007) - Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide

https://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf

⁶⁹ WHO (2007) - Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide

1. **Public and built space:** well-designed and maintained public spaces and parks, green spaces, streets, clearly legible signs and public toilets encourage mobility for elderly people, as they leave their homes more often and feel safe outside their own four walls.
2. **Public transport:** safer, reliable and affordable public transport motivates elderly people to go out of the house more often. Many people no longer drive themselves because of their age, but still want to go out, meet friends, go shopping or attend events when public transport is available.
3. **Housing:** regardless of age, everyone has the right to adequate housing. An age-friendly community helps elderly people to choose their place of residence and to adapt it to their needs.
4. **Social participation:** in old age it is particularly important to keep in touch with friends and family members. Age-friendly communities give elderly people space and opportunities to participate in various community programmes.
5. **Respect and social integration:** discrimination against elderly people often makes them feel excluded or deprived of their rights. Age-friendly communities fight against age discrimination, bring people of different ages together and try to put the image of ageing in a positive direction.
6. **Civil society participation and employment:** Elderly people increasingly want to stay active for longer, work, engage in voluntary activities, become involved in specific issues or become active in politics or an association. Age-friendly communities accept and value the experience of elderly people, support and employ them. This creates a bond, they are happy to belong to a group and feel useful and needed. This benefits not only the elderly themselves, but the whole of society.
7. **Communication and information:** in order for elderly people to remain active members of society, it is essential that they are informed about their opportunities. An age-friendly community ensures that elderly people are informed in an appropriate form of services and relevant events.
8. **Public health services:** easily accessible and affordable health services are essential for elderly people to remain healthy, independent and active. It is important that these services are available at the place of residence or that there are ways of ensuring these services.⁷⁰

The World Health Organisation (WHO) organised the first age-friendly conference in Dublin in 2011, where many participating countries signed the Dublin Declaration and EU policies were adapted to the WHO guidelines. The Declaration also contains an action plan for active ageing⁷¹, which aims to create and promote age-friendly communities. In the same year, the EU launched the European Year 2012, which was dedicated to active ageing and intergenerational solidarity. The aim of the initiative was to raise awareness of demographic trends, to raise awareness of the importance of the quality of life of

⁷⁰ <https://www.olderpeoplewales.com/en/ageing-well/afcs/what-makes-a-community-age-friendly.aspx>

⁷¹ https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/170316/RC62wd10-Ger.pdf

elderly people and to find answers to maintain the health and activity levels of elderly people.⁷² The legacy of the European Year of Active Ageing was published in the publication "Towards an Age-Friendly EU by 2020⁷³" jointly by AGE Platform Europe and the European Committee of the Regions. It describes in detail the importance of age-friendly communities and presents the work of AGE, or motivates communities to create an age-friendly environment through good examples. By 2013, several cities and municipalities had joined this initiative of age-friendly communities. Therefore, the "Dublin Declaration" has been extended and the "Declaration on Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in Europe" has been ⁷⁴established with the support of European and global organisations.

The 2018 WHO report "The Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities"⁷⁵ redefined detailed and defined age-friendly environments as follows: an age-friendly environment is free of social and physical barriers, is designed by health care decision-makers, systems, service providers and technologies that recognise the skills and opportunities of elderly people, adapt flexibly to the needs of elderly people, respect the choices of elderly people, strive for equality, support those in need and promote the integration of elderly people. The design of such an environment requires changes and reforms in several areas (such as health, transport, housing, work or social areas, among others).

The cooperation and commitment of governments, service providers, civil societies, the older generation itself and their families is needed to achieve these goals and reforms. The Co-AGE project promotes the creation of such an age-friendly environment by creating space for it and building a bridge between elderly people and volunteers.

Best practice examples of age-friendly communities

The previous chapter shows that the methodology for designing age-friendly communities has long been available in theory. However, the question arises as to how this works in practice, and whether this can be demonstrated through statistics, reports, analysis and strategies. Fortunately, more and more cities and municipalities are pursuing the goal of making their living environment age-friendly. Year after year, such practice-oriented and well-functioning projects are emerging that can serve as examples for making more municipalities age-friendly.

⁷² <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/eu-affairs/20120106STO34946/2012-european-year-of-active-ageing>

⁷³ https://www.age-platform.eu/sites/default/files/Towards_an_Age_Friendly_EU_FINAL.pdf

⁷⁴ Széman (2016) - Idősbarát városok, helyek, közösségek, Esély: Társadalom és szociálpolitikai folyóirat 27: (2) pp. 93-114 [Age-friendly towns, places, communities, opportunity: Society and Social Policy Journal].

⁷⁵ WHO (2018) - The Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES IN EUROPE

Many projects have been launched across Europe to improve the quality of life of elderly people. Year after year, more and more municipalities are initiating the development and implementation of age-friendly solutions. Ireland's exemplary age policy makes it a model for other EU countries, and it is no coincidence that the country first won the title of **age-friendly country** in 2019. The title was awarded by the World Health Organisation (WHO), as Ireland has had age-friendly programmes in place for more than ten years, and all 31 counties now have their own age-friendly strategy. In all communities, the design of age-friendly infrastructure, housing, communications and health services is a primary objective.⁷⁶

The **TITTAN** (Network for Technology, Innovation and Translation in Aging) project, which is part of the Interreg Europe programme, addresses the challenges of ageing and seeks to improve the quality and performance of European regional health systems through innovative solutions. The aim of the project is to exchange experiences, present best practice examples, compare age-friendly measures, and develop technological solutions that support healthy and active ageing. The project will be implemented in 7 European regions: Galicia (Lead Partner, ES), Basque Country (ES), Scotland (UK), Amsterdam (NL), Lombardy (IT), Saxony (DE) and Lower Silesia (PL). During implementation, the Amsterdam age-friendly approach was recognised as an outstanding good example. Amsterdam joined the WHO list of age-friendly cities in 2015.

The **Chave de Afetos** (Key of Love) project from Porto (PT) is also one of the outstanding good examples of the WHO's age-friendly network of cities. Launched in 2019, the project aims to give Porto's isolated elderly people a sense of security and integrate them into society by integrating human resources and modern technologies. The elderly people participating in the programme are monitored by various monitoring systems and by modern emergency call systems, in order to send help in time in case of emergency. In addition, volunteers visit the participants on a weekly basis, thereby reducing their feelings of exclusion, loneliness and isolation.⁷⁷

Another age-friendly city is **Poznan (CZ)**, whose project received great public attention in 2019. The project "**Seniors cuddle little ones**" offers help to parents (and their children) who, for some reason, cannot stay with their children during their stay in hospital and therefore cannot give them the important physical closeness and security. Applicants are selected in a strict procedure and can only carry out their voluntary activity after several relevant training courses.

⁷⁶ <https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2019/1216/1099456-age-friendly-who/>

⁷⁷ <https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/afp/chave-de-afetos/>

A partnership consisting of five European countries (Austria, Germany, Italy, Lithuania and the Netherlands) successfully completed its **Mobility Scouts** project between 2016 and 2018. The aim of the project was to involve elderly people in the decision-making processes about age-friendly communities. Within the project, public institutions, service providers and elderly people have jointly developed and implemented age-friendly policies in all five partner countries. After the start of the project, elderly people took part in a training course, after which they were awarded the title of "co-producer", thus becoming "agents of change" in their community and officially playing an active and committed role in shaping the age-friendly environment.

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES IN HUNGARY

In recent decades, the issues of creating age-friendly communities and supporting the elderly have also become increasingly important in Hungary. In addition to government measures, Hungarian and international projects have been implemented to promote dialogue between the generations and improve the quality of life of elderly people.

Village or rural service ⁷⁸

The Hungarian government introduced the village/farm service in 1993. Both are regular social services designed to compensate for the lack of services and infrastructure in small settlements. Service staff help the population of settlements with fewer than 600 and 400 people respectively to cover their basic needs and use public services.

Domestic help with warning system ⁷⁹

Home help with a warning system was introduced in Hungary in 1993. These can be applied for by people in need of health and social assistance who live in their own homes. Elderly or disabled people can make an emergency call if they need help in a crisis situation. This enables a nurse to visit and care for the needy person in person as quickly as possible, or to report the case to a doctor or emergency services if necessary.

Award for age-friendly communities

The Award for Age-Friendly Communities was established in 2004 by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Interior on the recommendation of the Council for Ageing. Since then, the prize has been awarded

⁷⁸ 1993.III.törvény 57. és 60.§ szerinti szociális alapszolgáltatás [Basic social services according to §§ 57 and 60 of Act III of 1993]

⁷⁹ 1993.III.törvény 65.§ szerinti szociális alapszolgáltatás [Basic social services according to § 65 of Act III of 1993]

annually, and 110 municipalities have now won it. The aim of the prize is to support those municipalities that have achieved outstanding results in the field of age policy. Municipalities can apply if they support local age-friendly organisations, organise programmes for elderly people, integrate elderly people into society or community life, promote cooperation between generations, support the skills of elderly people, and thereby promote the health of elderly people and improve their quality of life.⁸⁰

The following municipalities have won the prize within the framework of Interreg AT-HU 2014-2020:

- **Lenti (2015 and 2019)**

The municipality of Lenti pays great attention to elderly people, promotes age-friendly organisations in particular, celebrates Elderly people's Day, organises regular programmes for elderly people, provides regular social care at home, integrates elderly people into community life through voluntary activities and organises a club for joint walks with elderly people.

- **Szombathely (2014)**

The Municipality of Szombathely won the prize for age-friendly communities in 2014, because of its outstanding commitment to the elderly and the improvement of their quality of life beyond the prescribed tasks. Among other things, the **Helping Hands** programme was established, which provides free Internet access, a smartphone and an emergency wristband for people over 75 years of age, thus increasing the sense of security of elderly people. In addition, the **Active Ageing Programme** has been set up, in which excursions for elderly people are organised together with young volunteers. Thus, in addition to providing opportunities for excursions, the programme also offers the opportunity to bring generations together.

- **Zalaegerszeg (special prize 2013)**

Zalaegerszeg Municipality won the prize in 2013 because of its emphasis on supporting age-friendly organisations. In addition, a committee for the elderly was set up here to promote the development of an appropriate infrastructure. Clubs for the elderly are run, and a retirement home and a temporary nursing home have also been established.

- **Győr (2010 and 2018)**

In the city Győr the creation and maintenance of an age-friendly living environment is of great importance. The municipality has received awards for the implementation of numerous projects and programmes for elderly people. Every 5 years the health picture and the concept for increasing the quality of life of elderly people is drawn up and coordinated by the Council

⁸⁰ https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Id%C5%91sbar%C3%A1t_%C3%96nkorm%C3%A1nyzat_d%C3%ADj

for the Aged. Among other things, an **online information forum** (Idősvonal) and a care centre for people suffering from dementia have been set up. The so-called **network for chatting** (volunteer active seniors visit lonely seniors once a week) and the **Volunteer Granny Service** (once a week two volunteer "grandmothers" look after younger children to relieve their parents) are also among the many programmes that promote the activity of the elderly and cooperation between the generations. In addition to the numerous projects, concerts and various events are organised for the older generation.⁸¹

- **Kőszeg (2019)**

The city Kőszeg pays great attention to elderly people, fights against loneliness and exclusion, and supports the older generation by introducing age-friendly services.

- **Szentgotthárd (2019)**

The old-age policy of Szentgotthárd Municipality was awarded because the town supports the operation of senior citizens' clubs and promotes the cooperation of the generations with various programmes.

In addition to the prize for age-friendly communities, age-friendly initiatives are also implemented within the framework of numerous other projects and programmes, such as the nationwide initiative **Buch nach Hause!** Libraries transmit the content of books in digital form or volunteers deliver the books directly to the elderly people. The **Neighbours for each other** movement (**SZEM**) is also a nationwide programme. It was founded by the National Association of Neighbourhood Watch and aims to reduce and prevent crime locally.

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES IN AUSTRIA

The design of age-friendly communities and an age-friendly living environment has also long been of high relevance in Austria. Throughout the country, more and more municipalities have the term "age-friendly" in their mission statement. In 2004 the Pensioners' Association of Austria and Volkshilfe jointly founded the Award for Age-Friendly Communities, which is awarded every two years to those communities that support the elderly themselves and the design of an age-friendly living environment with exemplary projects. In the Co-AGE project region there are numerous communities that have already won this prize.

- **Graz (2008)**

In Graz, great importance is attached to increasing and maintaining the quality of life of elderly people. For this reason, a **senior citizens' office** has been set up which supports the

⁸¹ http://hirek.gyor.hu/cikk/idosbarat_onkormanyzat_cimet_kapott_a_varos.html

improvement of the quality of life of elderly people on site through various measures and projects. The office not only looks after active seniors, but also elderly people in need of help and care. The aim is to network committed active seniors with appropriate organisations and to motivate them to volunteer. The work of the office is supported not only by the employees but also by numerous volunteer seniors. With their ideas and experiences they make an important contribution to the daily work. The office introduced a so-called senior citizen card, which entitles senior citizens to participate in cultural events, courses and training at a reduced rate. The target group of elderly people can inform themselves about the current possibilities in a handbook for senior citizens.

Two outstandingly successful projects were decisive for the award of the prize for age-friendly municipalities. The project **SenEmpower - Hallo Nachbar!** was carried out in 6 regions of the EU, including Graz. Within the framework of the project, voluntary elderly people were trained, who personally informed other elderly people about possibilities, programmes and services to support the social integration of the target group.

Another project that is still successful today is **Points4action**. The project tries to connect generations and bring them closer together. Within the framework of the project, young people (13-19 years) take part in joint programmes with elderly people, for which they receive so-called Points, which can be redeemed in restaurants, cinemas or bookstores.

- **Donaustadt - 22nd district of Vienna (2008)**

The 22nd district in Vienna attaches great importance to leisure activities and programmes for elderly people. Regular meetings for seniors are organised, in so-called laughing clubs the participants laugh together with the support of trainers. In addition to leisure activities, the district offers numerous services in care and nursing. The aim of the district is to guarantee full accessibility. It is useful and convenient for elderly people to be able to shop in the "Mobile Shop". A showcase project in the Danube city is the **sALTo project**. The aim of sALTo is to support elderly people and to create an age-friendly environment, which is highly relevant in health prevention. Within the project, numerous mini-projects have been carried out, such as the **Vital Postcard project**. Postcards were distributed at various leisure events, with a quotation on one side (e.g. "I didn't believe it, you don't forget how to ride a bike!" or "I'm taking part in a training course and learning Turkish in a park") and a list on the other side, "100 reasons to go out", with 100 good ideas and reasons why elderly people should go out (e.g. to exchange recipes, to climb stairs, become a loaner grandfather, etc.). The postcard campaign was very successful, many people collected and exchanged them, all cards gave new and useful information.

Another successful sALTo idea was the **intergenerational sports festival**. Games were organised in different sports, the groups were put together according to certain criteria, e.g. the members of a team had to be 150 years old together, with one member being a maximum of 13, another at least 50 years old, etc. The events brought the different generations together, promoted the social integration of elderly people and increased the positive perception of the older generation. SALTo tried to connect people not only personally but also virtually. A telephone chain was also set up, within a chain 8 to 10 people called each other once a week to chat. Everyone had a fixed position in the chain, the first had to call the second, the second the third and the last the first. On average, these chains of conversations were completed within two hours. This gave the elderly the opportunity to get to know others and to feel less lonely.⁸²

- **Pötttsching (2004)**

Pötttsching is a municipality with 3,000 inhabitants which has its own social centre and provides home care for elderly people. The senior citizens' association also organises numerous excursions, trips, sports facilities, further education and cultural programmes for elderly people on site. Within the settlement, a so-called Gmoa bus ("Gmoa" - local dialect for "community") is available to drive needy persons in the local area within Pötttsching to anywhere within the settlement for a symbolic price.

- **Riedlingsdorf (2008)**

The municipality of Riedlingsdorf also pays special attention to the older generation and to increasing their quality of life. The municipality organises programmes on health prevention, the local area has been made barrier-free, special housing units (bungalows) have been set up for people over 50 years of age in need of care, and programmes are regularly organised for the elderly and for relatives of people in need of care in order to provide and exchange useful information.

Of course, many other good examples can also be found in Austria, such as the **Lebensplatz Rechberg** project, in which flats were adapted to the needs of elderly people and an intergenerational kindergarten was established as a meeting zone for the generations. Here elderly people and children can bake, do handicrafts, paint, do gymnastics or read together - thus, among other things, the children

⁸² PlanSinn und die Partner.at (2008) - sALTo Gut und selbstbestimmt älter werden im Stadtteil [sALTo Good and self-determined ageing in the district]
http://www.forschungsnetzwerk.at/downloadpub/salto_endbericht_2008.pdf

are taught mutual trust and respect in the community. The project was very successful with both children and elderly people.⁸³

In the 21st century, we can use modern technologies to make a significant impact on the well-being and living conditions of elderly people. The **WAY 2025** project aims to use modern technology to make the living environment of elderly people more age-friendly. The project analyses which AAL (Ambient Assisted Living)⁸⁴ solutions can best support the everyday life of elderly people in their own living space. In the course of the project, an AAL system was installed in the municipality of Mühlviertler Alm in 40 households, and functions or reactions and needs of the target group were tested and evaluated.

Fortunately, there are many good examples and more creative solutions are being used to create an age-friendly environment.

Finally, it is important to mention the first relevant project in the common Austrian-Hungarian border area, which was completed with great success in 2019. This is the project **Age-Friendly Region**. The aim of the project fits very well with the activities of the Co-AGE project, as both projects have defined the design and support of age-friendly communities in the common border area as a fundamental task. In the framework of the Age-Friendly Region project a model for Case and Care Management (CCM) has been developed. In this way, the quality of life of elderly people was improved by involving care organisations and 200 families in active cross-border cooperation. The case managers visited the people participating in the project at home to support them in health and social issues or in care (e.g. involvement of care staff, ordering meals, administrative tasks). Building on the results and experiences of the Age-Friendly Region project, the Co-AGE project also aims to ensure sustainable and long-term cooperation between the generations and to support the creation of age-friendly communities.

⁸³ Oö. Zukunftsakademie (2016) - Altersfreundliche Lebensräume [Upper Austrian Academy of the Future (2016) - Age-friendly living spaces]

⁸⁴ "Ambient Assisted Living (AAL, occasionally also "Active Assisted Living") comprises methods, concepts, (electronic) systems, products and services which support the everyday life of elderly and also disabled people in a situation-dependent and unobtrusive manner.

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambient_Assisted_Living

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Proportion of participation in informal and formal voluntary activities in the 28 EU Member States, 2015 (inhabitants aged 16 and over).....	10
Figure 2 Share of participation in informal and formal voluntary activities in Hungary, 2019.....	11
Figure 3 Share of participation in informal and formal voluntary activities in Austria, 2016.....	11
Figure 4 Areas of voluntary activity (informal and formal) in Hungary 2019.....	13
Figure 5 Areas of informal volunteering in Austria, 2016.....	13
Figure 6 Areas of formal voluntariness in Austria, 2016.....	14
Figure 7 Motives of the volunteers interviewed in Hungary in 2019.....	16
Figure 8 Motives of respondents in Austria 2016.....	17
Figure 9 Share of voluntary work in the EU, 2015.....	19
Figure 10 Participation in formal voluntary work by age group in the EU, 2015.....	20
Figure 11 Share of informal voluntary work by age group in the EU, 2015.....	20
Figure 12 Participation in formal volunteering after school education in the EU, 2015.....	21
Figure 13 Participation in informal voluntary work after school education in the EU, 2015.....	21
Figure 14 Voluntary work by gender in the EU, 2015.....	22
Figure 15 Voluntary work by gender in the EU, 2015.....	22
Figure 16 Special forms of voluntary work in Austria, 2019.....	25
Figure 17 Participation rate in voluntary activities in Austria, 2016.....	28
Figure 18 Volunteering by gender, 2016.....	28
Figure 19 Participation in voluntary activities by age groups, 2016.....	29
Figure 20 Participation rate in voluntary activities according to school education, 2016.....	29

Figure 21 Participation by employment, 2016	30
Figure 22 Participation in voluntary activities by size of residence, 2016	30
Figure 23 Participation in voluntary activities by federal state, 2016.....	31
Figure 24 Participation in voluntary activities in Hungary, 2019	35
Figure 25 Participation by gender in Hungary.....	35
Figure 26 Participation in voluntary activities by age group in Hungary, 2019.....	36
Figure 27 Participation in voluntary activities after schooling in Hungary, 2019.....	36
Figure 28 Participation in voluntary activities by employment in Hungary, 2019	37
Figure 29 Participation in voluntary activities by residence in Hungary, 2019	37
Figure 30 Number of volunteers by county in Hungary, 2019	38
Figure 31 Distribution of the population aged 60 and over by geographical region worldwide, 2015, or forecast for 2030 and 2050.....	47
Figure 32 Forecast of population aged 65 and over in the EU, Austria and Hungary	48
Figure 33 WHO-Flower	49

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: WHO areas and segments for quality of life surveys (WHO 1997)	44
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LIST OF SOURCES

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