

Unpaid activities to benefit others

Year 2013

The outcomes of the first survey on voluntary work are issued today, as a result of the agreement between Istat, CSVnet (National Coordination of Volunteer Support Centres) and the Volontariato e Partecipazione Foundation.

Approximately one out of eight Italians does unpaid activities to benefit others or the community. In Italy the number of volunteers is estimated at 6.63 millions people, (*total volunteering rate* equal to 12.6%). 4,414 millions citizens did their activity through a group or an organization (*organisation-based volunteering rate* equal to 7.9%) and three millions were directly involved (*direct volunteering rate* equal to 5.8%)

Volunteer work is more widespread in the North of the Country. The highest volunteering rate was recorded in the North-East (16%), while the South area is characterised by a noticeably lower participation rate (8.6%).

Men were more active than women (13.3% against 11.9%), due to greater male participation in organisation-based volunteering. Volunteers belong mainly to the 55-64 age group (15.9%). The contribution of the young and the old in terms of active involvement is, instead, lower than the national average.

The share of those performing voluntary activities grows with educational level. 22.1% of university graduates experienced volunteering against 6.1% of those who only completed primary schooling.

Considering the occupational level, those in employment (14.8%) and students (12.9%) were the most active. Participation is, moreover, at the highest among the members of more affluent families (23.4%) and at the lowest among members of families with entirely insufficient means (9.7%).

The average volunteer engagement was 19 hours in four weeks. The greatest hourly contribution in direct voluntary activities was the one of women and senior citizens. People in an excellent financial situation and people aged 55 – 74 devote an above average number of hours to voluntary activities.

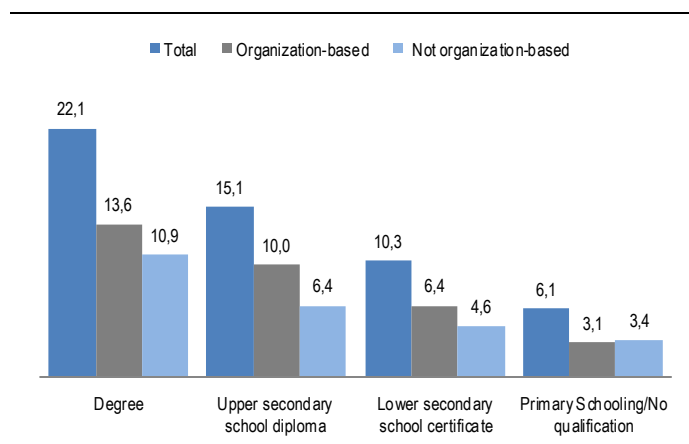
Organization-based voluntary activities are more diversified and qualified than direct voluntary activities. Approximately a volunteer out of six is involved in more than one organization (16.2%).

Organization-based volunteering is a consolidated practice: 76.9% of people has been involved in the same activity for three or more years and 37.7% for over ten years. Conversely, 48.9% of those performing direct volunteering has been doing it for less than two years.

23.2% of volunteers is active in religious groups/organisations, 17.4% in cultural and recreational activities, 16.4% in the health sector, 14.2% in social services and emergency intervention, 8.9% in sports, 3.4% in environment and 3.1% in education and research.

62.1% of organization-based volunteers performed their activities because they believed “in the cause promoted by the group/organization”. 49.6% of those volunteering stated they felt better about themselves.

FIGURE 1. PEOPLE AGED 14 AND OVER WHO PERFORMED UNPAID ACTIVITIES TO BENEFIT OTHERS IN THE 4 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE SURVEY, PER INSTITUTIONAL SETTING AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION. Year 2013, per 100 people aged 14 and over with the same characteristics.



For more details please refer to the italian version

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