



International Year of Volunteers 2001

Volunteering Statistics in Sweden

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The following analysis is based on the National Reports handed in by each participating national member of ETWelfare. Website: <http://www.etwelfare.com/analnr1.htm>.

- Non-profit associations in Sweden are called "Ideell Förening" (translation: association that is motivated by some sort of general ideal) - no specific law, only case law
- **Definition of volunteering:** time and effort that is freely (not forced and not paid) placed within non-governmental- and public organisations by individuals (SOU 1993:82 "Public Investigations").
- **Motives:** to enhance ones personal social capital, family tradition, peer pressure, be a voice for vulnerable people, to be part of the democratic process of society, create meaning in your life, to help people, etc.
- **Number of volunteers, all sectors included:** about 2,6 million individuals work some time on a volunteer basis in Sweden each year, which means about 28% of the Swedish people (Lundström & Wijkström 1997).
- **Time spent:** approximately 480 million hours of volunteer work is put down in Sweden every year. (on average about 185 hours per individual per year, which is about 3,6 hours per person and week) (Lundström & Wijkström 1997).
- **Who volunteers?** The higher "social arena-index" a person has the higher is also the chance that the person does volunteer work (e.g. parents of young children are active in schools, kindergarten, maternity care, hospitals, etc.) - about 3 million Swedes (aged 16 -74) work yearly in at least one organisation, i.e. 48% of the population. Out of these it is more usual that women are active than men (52% -44%). The predominant age group is 30 -44 (Public Investigations SOU 1993: 82).
- **Number of so-called "charitable associations":** between 180 000 and 200 000 organisations exist in Sweden (Lundström, Wijkström 1995).
- **Number of paid and unpaid workers:** approximately 2,6 million persons that are active; around 500 000 individuals (of them) work on a regular basis; number of paid workers is no less than 5000, probably more (Svedberg 1996).

There has been a book published by Gaskin, K., and Davis Smith, J. (1995) *A New Civic Europe: The Extent and Nature of Volunteering in Europe*, Institute for Volunteering Research however, it must be purchased - it is not available online.