

# Activation in non-governmental sector: characteristics of currently active members, potentially active population and disinterested population

## Background

Volunteering represents one of the elements of a healthy society, and has many beneficial outcomes at the individual and social level. However, minority of people is taking active role in volunteering. Also, people differ in their willingness and/or dispositions to help other people as well as in their actual partaking in volunteering behavior. It seems necessary to differentiate among willingness to do something good for others, and actual partaking in it, since research showed that willingness to volunteer is necessary but not sufficient precondition of participation in volunteering. For example, less then 33% of students who expressed intention to volunteer actually did it (Okun & Sloane, 2002). Thus, it seemed interesting to examine what are the characteristics of people who volunteer and/or express their willingness to do so, and what are the characteristics that differentiate them from those who are not willing to participate in volunteering behavior.

## Objectives

1. to identify prevalence of:
- a) NGOs active members
- b) people who expressed intention to become NGO members – potentially active population
- c) people who are not interested in becoming NGO members – disinterested population
2. to examine similarity and differences between those three groups with regard to:
- a) individual characteristics (gender, age, educational level, marital status, employment status)
- b) frequency and form of informal volunteering
- c) frequency of money donations to various charity recipients

## Methodology\*

- National survey:
- a multi-stage probability-based sample of 1008 adults, conducted in 62 cities and villages, 102 sample points
- face to face interviews
- marginal sampling error: +/-3.2 %
- interviews conducted: July 2005
- response rate: 87.1%

\* Data collection was supported by Academy of Educational Development (AED)

## Results

### NGO membership

Are you an NGO member?	%
no	90.5
yes, but not active	3.2
active member- volunteer	5.4
active member - professional	0.2
without response	0.7



8.8% of the sample consider themselves to be an NGO member

### Expressed INTENTION to become NGO member

Would you become involved in the work of an NGO if....?	Current non-members (N=912)	Current NGO active members (N=55)
certainly would	12.6%	35.2%
probably would	21.1%	38.9%
Total	33.7%	74.1%

Less than one-tenth of all Croatian citizens (8.8%) consider themselves to be NGO members, while 5.4% of citizens declared themselves as active volunteers.

AGE	
Younger than 30	5.7%
30 – 59	11.5%
60 and older	5.5%

EDUCATION LEVEL	
High	13.5%
Medium	8.8%
Low	4.7%

AGE	
Younger than 30	41.1 %
30 - 59	34 %
60 and older	25.4%

EDUCATION LEVEL	
High	40.6%
Medium	34.3%
Low	26.8%

Regarding the membership in NGOs, significant differences were found only in terms of age and educational level. Among NGOs active members, middle-aged citizens and those with higher level of education are overrepresented.

A little more than one-third of Croatian citizens (36.4%) stated that they would certainly or probably get involved in the work of an NGO if, in their community, there is an NGO dealing with issues that interest them and if someone from that NGO invites them directly to become an active member. Under those optimal conditions, three-fourths (74.1%) of currently active NGO members would join to another NGO.

The percentage of those willing to join an NGO under mentioned optimal conditions was considerably larger in the youngest age group, and among citizens with higher education.

### Marital status and NGO membership status

NGO membership status	Married (N=415)	Single (N=198)	Cohabitation (N=17)	Widowed (N=74)
NGOs active members	7.5	9.6	5.9	5.4
Potentially active population	40.0	58.6	76.5	39.2
Disinterested population	52.5	31.8	17.6	55.4

### Employment status and NGO membership status

NGO membership status	Steady job (N=277)	Part-time job (N=63)	Unemployed (N=83)	Retired (N=181)	Housewives & Students (N=102)
NGOs active members	7.9	3.2	14.5	5.5	9.8
Potentially active population	48.4	46.0	49.4	35.9	54.9
Disinterested population	43.7	50.8	36.1	58.6	35.3

### Average frequencies of informal volunteering with regard of different forms (1=almost every week, 4= I didn't )

Forms of informal volunteering	NGOs active members		Potentially active population		Disinterested Population		F-ratio
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
giving advices to someone	2.0	1.00	2.2	1.06	3.0	1.01	50.7***
taking care of someone's property or pets	3.0	1.00	3.1	0.98	3.4	0.82	13.5***
providing transport to someone	2.7	0.20	2.7	1.10	3.3	0.94	26.4***
watching after someone's children	2.9	1.10	3.1	1.06	3.5	0.86	15.6***
shopping or doing errands for someone	2.74	0.99	2.79	1.03	3.3	0.92	21.9***
writing letters or filling forms for someone	3.02	1.08	3.44	0.88	3.8	0.60	26.9***
doing house chores or housework for someone	3.27	1.10	3.44	0.95	3.72	0.63	12.69***
helping someone in house redecoration or car reparation	3.15	0.87	3.24	0.89	3.54	0.76	12.9***
taking care of someone during illness	3.41	0.93	3.38	0.96	3.58	0.72	4.7**
lending money to someone	3.01	0.89	2.99	0.86	3.39	0.74	21.4***
donating clothes or furniture to someone	3.17	0.78	3.13	0.75	3.53	0.68	26.2***

In the year preceding the survey, the percentage of citizens who have helped voluntarily to someone other than a family member, in any of the 11 described ways, varied from 27.4% to 75.6%. The most frequent forms of informal volunteerism (or helping others) practiced at least once in a year by more than half of Croatian citizens were counseling (75.6%); shopping or doing errands for someone (61.2%); providing transport (60.9%); lending money (59.4%); donating clothes, furniture etc. (55.6%); and taking care of assets or pets (49.8%).

Active NGOs members and potentially active population showed similar frequency of involvement in different forms of informal volunteering. In contrary, disinterested population participated in every form of informal volunteering statistically less frequent than those two groups.

### Average frequencies of money donations by type of charity recipients (1=almost every week, 4= I didn't )

Recipients of money donations	NGO aactive members		Potentially active population		Disinterested pppopulation		F-ratio
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
individuals in need	2.5	0.99	2.1	0.97	1.7	0.89	27.5***
some specific NGOs	1.9	0.94	1.5	0.74	1.2	0.58	27.0***
charity organizations	1.9	0.95	1.8	0.84	1.5	0.81	13.9***
church charity organization	2.0	1.13	2.0	0.98	1.8	0.98	1.3
church– e.g. for church building	2.2	1.22	1.9	0.97	1.7	0.93	5.7**
beggars on the street	2.6	1.11	2.5	1.02	2.1	1.05	18.5***
humanitarian actions for people with illness	2.5	0.98	2.3	0.89	1.8	0.94	26.3***

The percentage of Croatian citizens who donate money to various recipients varies from 26.7% to 70.7%. The greatest percentage of citizens donates money to beggars in the streets and to people with illness during humanitarian actions. There are no significant differences in money donations to various recipients among already active NGO members and those who expressed intention to become NGOs members under optimal conditions. In general, those two groups donate money more frequently to various recipients than disinterested population.

## Conclusion

A relatively small number of Croatian citizens is currently involved in the work of an NGOs, but relatively high proportion of them expressed their willingness to become involved in NGOs work under optimal conditions.

Regarding involvement in NGOs work and willingness to join an NGO, the results showed that younger and middle-age persons, more educated, singles, and (un)employed persons stand out.

Potentially active population is very similar to already active NGOs members in their willingness to help others (informal volunteering) as well as in frequency by which they donate money to various charity recipients. Informal volunteering and money donations are statistically significant more prevalent among those two groups of Croatian citizens than among disinterested population.

Our results thus suggest that group of people who expressed their willingness to participate in NGOs work represent the true potential for future active involvement in NGOs activities.