



ANALYTIC NOTE

How Popular are the Volunteering and Participatory Activities among Moldovans?

The importance of volunteering and participatory activities¹ is crucial, as these activities ensure the involvement of community members in the settlement of some stringent social problems in areas where the private initiative or Government policies are insufficient or inefficient. There are plenty of such problems in the Republic of Moldova, in particular at the local level, where the importance of active involvement of community members is indispensable. In this note, we will answer the following questions:

- What forms and how often the volunteering is practiced in Moldova, as compared with other European countries?
- Who are more involved in volunteering activities and public meetings: men or women? People with a higher or lower level of education? With higher or lower income?

In order to find answers to these questions, we will use the results of the Time Use Survey, carried out by the National Bureau of Statistics.

¹According to the Activity Classifier of the Time Use Survey, "Volunteer work and meetings" group of activities include volunteer and unpaid activities: (i) Work for/via organizations; (ii) Aid provided to households; (iii) Participatory activities.

What forms and how often the volunteering is practiced in Moldova, as compared with other European countries?

The most frequent form of volunteering, practiced by Moldovans of 10 years and older, is the volunteer and unpaid assistance provided to other households, for which an average of 12 minutes a day are allocated. This is more than in other European countries, such as Slovenia - 10 minutes; Spain - 7 minutes; Italy - 7 minutes; Germany - 8 minutes².

In addition, Moldovans allocate an average of 9 minutes a day for participatory activities, which is a longer period than in other European countries: Slovenia - 3 minutes, Spain - 3 minutes, Italy - 4 minutes, Germany - 4 minutes³.

At the same time, Moldovans allocate only 0.4 minutes a day for volunteering work in organi-

²HETUS database: <https://www.h2.scb.se/tus/tus/>.

³Idem.

zations, which is much less than in other European countries: Slovenia - 2 minutes, Spain - 1 minute, Italy - 2 minutes, Germany - 9 minutes⁴. Only 0.2% of the Moldovan population of 10 years and older is performing volunteer work though some organizations/institutions.

Thus, we notice that in Moldova the perception of volunteering activities is specific for a country with a high ruralization level. This refers to small communities where inhabitants help each other, without being part of any organizations and where the church has an important role and authority. At the same time, participation in social organization with a formal volunteering job is not a widely recognized tradition in the country, unlike in other Western countries.

Where the volunteering activities are more popular: in towns or villages?

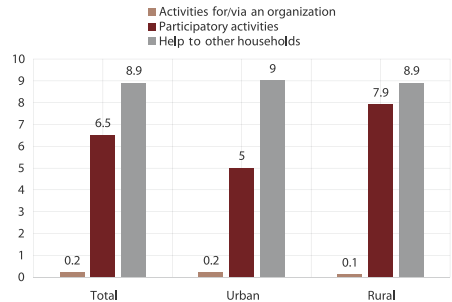
The differences with the involvement in volunteering activities between the rural and urban population refer mainly to the participation rate rather than the volume of time invested. Thus, while there are no major differences between the time dedicated for such activities between areas of residence (2.4 hours in villages, 2.5 hours in towns and 2.4 hours in Chisinau municipality, on the average per person), the share of the rural population practicing volunteering activity is higher than in towns. According to the survey, about 16.9% of the rural population carries out various volunteering activities, versus 14.2% of urban population (Figure 1).

The largest differences are noticed with regards to participatory activities⁵, which attract 7.9% of village inhabitants and only 5% of town inhabitants. These discrepancies may be explained by the higher proportion between the rural versus urban population practicing religious activities: 7.3% versus 4.2%. At the same time, literally no differences were found in the participation rate of rural and urban population in activities related to helping other households⁶.

⁴ *Idem.*

⁵ Including: meetings, religious activities and other participatory activities.

Figure 1. Rate of population participation in the main volunteering activities, by areas of residence, %



Source: NBS

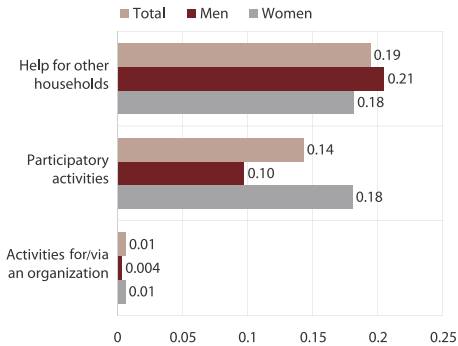
Who are more involved in volunteering activities and meetings: men or women?

As for the rate of participation in volunteer work and meetings, only about 1/7 (or 14.1%) of the population, including 16% of the country's women of 10 years and older and only 11.7% of men are practicing volunteer work and meetings for an average duration of 2 hours and 17 minutes in case of women and, respectively 2 hours and 39 minutes in case of men. About 6.5% of the population of 10 years and older are involved in participatory activities, women having a larger share (8.6%) than men (3.9%). Religious activities account for most of the time (96.7%) spent by people for these activities. This form of participation is common especially in villages, being practiced by 7.9% of rural population and only 5% of urban population.

Though in the Republic of Moldova the rate of women's participation in volunteering activities and meetings is higher than of men's, men of 10 years and older dedicate a bit more time to help other households than women (0.21 hours versus 0.18 hours a day) (Figure 2).

⁶ Including: Assistance with construction and repair works for other households; Assistance with other household's chores and agricultural work; Taking care of own children living in other households; Another type of taking care of children, as assistance provided to other households; Assistance provided to an adult member of another household; Another assistance provided to other households.

Figure 2. Average time allocated by population of 10 years and over for various forms of volunteering activities and meetings, by sex, hours a day



Source: NBS

The most widespread form of helping other households is “assistance with household chores” (46.5% of the time for volunteer work). One may also notice “assistance with taking care of children” (27.3% of the time for volunteer work), as well as assistance with agricultural works (12.3% of the time for volunteer work).

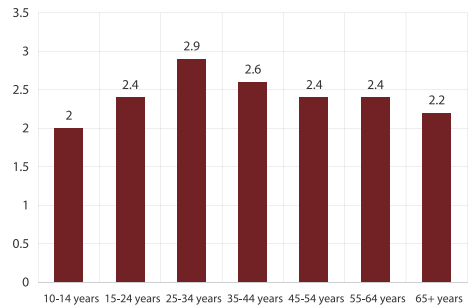
A possible explanation would be the fact that many of these activities, in particular household chores or agricultural works, required higher physical effort and can be performed easier by men. At the same time, women allocate more time for participatory activities (0.18 hours a day) than men do (0.10 hours a day).

What category of people are involved more often in volunteering activities and meetings?

Figure 3 reveals that though the age group of 25 to 34 years dedicate more time for volunteering activities, elder people still allocate important amount of time for such activities. The insignificant

differences of the time allocated by age groups confirm the peculiarity of volunteering activities, which imply mainly assistance to other households or visits to the church, which are also practiced by elder people.

Figure 3. The average time allocated to volunteering by people involved in such activities, by the main age groups, hours a day

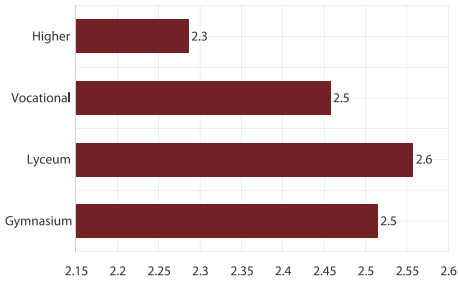


Source: NBS

This peculiarity of the volunteering activity in Moldova could explain why people with lower income and lower levels of education allocate more time for volunteering activities. Thus, people with an monthly income under MDL 5000 (of the 14.1% of people who practice volunteering activities and meetings of the total population) allocate by about 40% more time to volunteer work as compared with the rest of the population involved in such activities (2.5 hours versus 1.8 hours a day).

According to the survey, the higher the level of education is, the less time is dedicated to volunteer works and public meetings. Thus, of the active volunteers, people with higher education allocate on the average 2.3 hours for such activities, which is less than people with vocational education (2.5 hours a day) or high school education (2.6 hours a day) (Figure 4).

Figure 4. The average time allocated to volunteering by people involved in such activities, by the level of education, hours a day



Source: NBS

This is opposite to the experience of other European countries, where volunteering activities are practiced by people with a higher level of education and higher income⁷.

Conclusions:

- Moldovan people allocate relatively large amount of time for volunteer activities, but they mainly consists of informal volunteer activities, whereas in European countries people practice more actively formal activities. Thus, assistance provided to other households represents the most frequent form of volunteering and reveals the social solidarity of Moldovan people;
- Participation with volunteer works in social organizations is a less frequent practice, unlike other Western countries;
- More rural than urban people are practicing volunteering activities. However, the difference is determined by the more intense participation of rural population in religious activities. At the same time, for other types of volunteering activities (assistance provided to other households and work for/via an organization) differences by areas of residence were not found;

- In Moldova, more women are involved in volunteering activities than men, but the average duration of these activities is shorter in case of women than men;
- Women are involved in participatory activities to a higher extent than men, most of the time (96.7%) spent by people in these activities implying religious activities. Instead, men participate more by providing assistance to other households;
- People of 25 to 34 years old allocate most of the time to volunteering activities and meetings. However, the differences are not significant as compared with elder people, who also help other households and attend the church activities. Instead, volunteering activities specific for young people are practiced more seldom;
- Unlike the Western European countries, in the Republic of Moldova volunteer works are more frequently carried out by people with low income and a low level of education.

Recommendations:

- Formal volunteer activities, which imply participation in various non-government organizations, must be promoted and encouraged. Such activities educate the country's population, in particular young people, to have a higher social accountability, develop practical skills in various areas and facilitate the communication and networking among young people;
- Formal volunteering may be promoted, including by integrating it in the educational process and business environment, facilitating various forms of cooperation between social associations, educational institutions and private companies (e.g. internships and/or study visits for pupils at social associations, modules on volunteering in schools, etc.);
- Volunteering needs to be promoted more actively in the rural area, which encounters more problems that could be solved with the more active participation of community members. For that, a

⁷ M. Egerton, K.Mullan, „Being a Pretty Good Citizen”, Oxford University, Sociology Working Papers, Paper Number 2007-08.

cooperating attitude on local authorities is crucial. Mayor's Offices should support as much as possible the community-based social initiative, including by establishing partnerships and consortia in order to attract grants for local problems (waste management, sanitation, access to drinking water, social aid, etc.);

- It is worth paying attention to the UK practice, where elderly are encouraged to participate in volunteering activities as a way of social inclusion and provision of an active role in the society, which diminishes their solitude and isolation, and enhances their health.



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