



Volunteering in the Netherlands

Facts and Figures report



This report is part of the series “Facts and figures on volunteering in Europe”, giving an overview of the volunteering landscape in different countries of Europe. The country reports can be downloaded from www.cev.be.

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1. Introduction

The Dutch Welfare Policy defines volunteering¹ as “*work done in any organized context that is carried out without obligation and without pay for other people or the community whereby the person doing the work is not dependent on it for his or her livelihood*”².

According to Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, volunteering in the Netherlands has played an important role in health care, welfare work, nature conservation and the environment, culture, education and recreation. The volunteers’ contribution to the society is enormous as they not only take their social responsibilities seriously and by doing so represent a counterbalance to professionalized institutions, but their work also contributes to the social quality of the community. Voluntary work offers individuals the opportunity to reduce social isolation and in doing so provides avenues for self-fulfillment and development³.

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive overview of volunteering in the Netherlands. First, the historical background of volunteering in the Netherlands is discussed, followed by governmental policy and volunteer infrastructure.

Second part of the report provides general data on volunteering and is based on the study conducted by Socio Cultural Planning Bureau “*Volunteering up to 2015: a forward study*”, the research requested by the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, which was to serve as a basis for the Ministry’s policy development. Thereafter, the social trends in the Dutch society and their impact on (future) volunteering are discussed.

2. Attitudes towards Volunteering

2.1 Historical background

The foundations of today’s voluntary work can be found in industrialization in the 19th century when also the social and cultural traditions in the Netherlands changed radically. In 19th century voluntary work was carried out primarily by small group of wealthy people who, because of the very widespread poverty among most of the population, devoted themselves to the general cause of the community. Church and private institutions were also involved in caring for the poor, and by doing so involved many volunteers. As far as government was concerned, its involvement increased at the beginning of the 20th century, and social security measures were rooted in legislation and regulations. This led to general improvement of many

¹ Linguistic explanation: there are different expressions used to describe volunteering in Dutch: the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport uses the term “voluntary work, or “voluntary action”, organizations promoting volunteering however, prefer to use the term “vrijwillige inzet” which translates to English as volunteering contribution /input or just volunteering.

² Social Quality, Work in Progress. Welfare Policy Document 1999-2002

³ Documentation (January 2001,p.1)

people's standard of living and consequently many people got involved in voluntary activities. From then on, being a volunteer has no longer depended on the social class into which someone was born. Instead, involvement was based on a voluntary commitment to a principle⁴.

2.2 Welfare state and volunteering

Between the years 1945 and 1966 a welfare state was developed in the Netherlands bringing all sorts of amenities on the social front. The government embedded the initiative that originated in the private sector in legislation and regulations, and subsidized or regulated it through national insurance schemes. This act started as a supplementary assistance for the weakest in society and developed into a package of provisions for the vast majority of the population. Examples are the health insurance funds, unemployment benefits, the state retirement pension and incapacity benefits. The provisions of private bodies are no longer solely intended for their own constituencies. Care providers are becoming experts through special training. This trend towards professionalization has major implications for the traditional role of volunteer. Many of the tasks originally carried out by volunteers have been taken over by paid workers. The health care system has become professional and comprehensive. In 2001 the Ministry of Health, Sport and Welfare stated that there was no need for volunteers on the one hand and no stimulus to become a volunteer on the other hand⁵. In January 2007, however, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has started implementation of Social Support Act (Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning- Wmo). The Wmo is designed to enable people to live independently in society for as long as possible. In the first instance citizens must help each other in this respect. They can do this through voluntary work and informal care, for example, but also by providing good information and advice as well as support with child rearing and household work. If necessary, the local authorities will provide support⁶. The new policy is very likely to give more recognition and support to volunteering. On the other hand however, there is also a risk that volunteering will be "used" to reach the goals of the Social Support Act.

2.3 Evolution of volunteering

Since 1965 new types of voluntary work have emerged⁷. This trend is linked to the advent of new social movements and criticism of the performance of, for example institutionalized welfare work (e.g. volunteering at women's refuge centers). The growth of this "anti" movement encourages more people to look critically at the performance of paid workers. People also wanted a greater say in matters that concerned them personally. The creation of parents associations in schools, environmental focus groups and neighborhood committees are examples. The last

⁴ Documentation (January 2001,p.3)

⁵ Documentation (January, 2001,p.5)

⁶ Retrieved on 28 November 2007 from <http://www.minvws.nl/en/folders/dmo/2007/civil-participation-under-the-social-support-act-of-the-netherlands.asp>

⁷ Documentation (January, 2001,p.6)

decades of the 20th century were characterized by individualization. This had an impact on the willingness of the public to do voluntary work. Social and Cultural Report from the Social and Cultural Planning Office, published in 2000, points out that while there has been a substantial drop in the membership of political parties, trade unions and church organizations, this has had no effect on overall level of voluntary work in the Netherlands.

Trends in society impact the demand and the supply of voluntary work. The tight labour market and equal opportunities have been the major factors affecting the availability of volunteers. During the nineteen-eighties more people on unemployment benefits started volunteering. The improved state of the economy has reduced their availability because many people, being able to find paid job, gave up volunteering. The demand for labour has also resulted in older people, secondary school children and students giving priority to paid work. Moreover, more women have jobs and therefore have less time for voluntary work. Increased prosperity means that there are competing alternatives to spend free time, for example television, surfing the Internet and vacations.

Trends in the community translate into both threats and opportunities. Demographic trends, such as ageing and immigration, are facilitating participations by new groups of volunteers. A new trend is that companies are increasingly prepared to make facilities available for voluntary work and to encourage their employees to voluntary work, during working hours or in their own time. Employee volunteering is becoming more and more popular in Dutch companies.

The demand for voluntary work is also subject to change as a result, for example, the increased professionalism and growing awareness in relation to nature conservation and the environment. However, the expansion in the health care sector also resulted in sick, elderly and handicapped people asking for support at home. They are therefore calling for informal help, some of which is provided by volunteers.

3. Volunteering infrastructure

3.1 Governmental policy and organizations

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport coordinates the volunteering activities of other departments and stimulates them. Each of the departments is supposed to pursue its “own” voluntary sector policy.

Local authorities and provinces also have their own voluntary sector policies. The provinces have their own support functions, which have a part to play in a disseminating and implementing new methodologies at local level. Local authorities and provinces are working together with central government on plans to reinforce local voluntary work.

There are three types of organizations (linked with volunteering):

- organizations of members for members (sports, scouting)
- campaigning organizations (e.g. environmental focus groups)
- aid organizations (e.g. Red Cross)

Each category of organization has its own specific support needs. A joint social agenda makes it possible to agree about voluntary sector policy between the different levels of government and other parties. The result of this has been incorporated in the 1999- 2002 Programme Spearheads Welfare Policy Document⁸. The elaboration and harmonization of the actions in the voluntary sector take place in a number of ways, including through consultation between central government, the Association of the Netherlands Municipalities and the Association of Provincial Authorities.

The Netherlands has approximately 500 local authorities. The local level is the most important one at which members of the public are active, for example in shelter for the homeless, neighborhood and club houses and care. Local authorities are responsible for the executive level of welfare activities. They subsidize local organizations and provide facilities, such as sports centers. In some cases local authorities involve the voluntary sector platforms for instance. Local authorities have the lead in supporting change processes at local level. They receive support from the provinces.

The twelve Dutch provinces play an important part. They support the paid support staff at local level. They also disseminate knowledge and information that is produced at different levels, including national organizations.

Central government has been involved in policy for more than twenty years. Policy documents were published in 1980, 1985 and 1991. In those documents voluntary work was described as “indispensable to the community, but just like other unpaid work often invisible”. The policy set in 1999-2002 Welfare Policy Document⁹, was aimed at giving voluntary work greater visibility, at enlarging the support base for support and appreciation, and nurturing voluntary work for the future. Central government policy has the goal of equipping the voluntary sector sufficiently so that it can respond to the challenges that changes in society generate. The new Social Support Act, mentioned in chapter 2.2, is also responding to those changes. The most recent policy document on voluntary action (2005-2007) gives the priority to the need to support migrant volunteering, especially in mainstream voluntary organizations¹⁰. The current policy initiatives on volunteering aim to remove barriers to volunteering in the legal framework and improve the quality of local policies and volunteer support structure. Moreover, the Ministry defines “participation” of all citizens as the major goal of its policy on volunteering.

3.2 Policy elements and areas of attention

There are four main elements to central government policy:

- work development, research and support
- reinforcement, promotion and image improvement
- quality enhancement
- facet policy, legislation and regulation

⁸ Social Quality, Work in Progress, 1999-2000 cited in Documentation (2001,p.4)

⁹ Welzijnsnota 1999-2002

¹⁰ Retrieved from <http://www.involve-europe.eu/pdf/INVOLVEreportEN.pdf>

The following sub-chapters discuss each of the elements of the policy

3.2.1 Work development, research and support

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is involved with development, research and support relating to the voluntary sector through the facilitation of national organizations. Those organizations are concerned with information, advice, methodology development and research on behalf of voluntary sector organizations, provinces and local authorities.

There is a national development organization, that implements governmental policy, MOVISIE. The organization exists since January 2007 and it resulted from amalgamation of CIVIQ, the Dutch Volunteering Centre, Kenniscentrum Lesbisch and Homo-emancipatiebeleid (Information Center about Gay and Lesbian Emancipation Policy), Landelijk Centrum Opbouwwerk (Rural Center of Advancement Work), TransAct, X-S2, Information network center of social policy and departments of Dutch Institute of Care and Welfare.

MOVISIE is the knowledge centre and consultancy agency par excellence for volunteer work in the Netherlands which disseminates good practice, develop new methodologies and provide advice, training and support, as well as doing promotional work, research and product development.

Moreover, there are also national training centers where trainees, volunteers or aspiring volunteers receive instructions.

3.2.2 Reinforcement, promotion and image improvement

The areas of attention in the policy for reinforcing, promoting and improving voluntary work are:

- recruiting and keeping volunteers from specific categories (minorities, youth, the handicapped, elderly and women), including the Trendsetters Project which focuses on young people and voluntary work
- the interculturalization of voluntary work through *the Interculturalization of Voluntary Work Sector Plan*
- strengthening local voluntary sector support points responding to the changing behaviour of volunteers. MOVISIE supports and strengthens these points
- improving the information supply by disseminating more widely the information provided by MOVISIE
- contributing to the development of strategy in the area of fundraising
- giving visibility to and amplifying appreciation for volunteers. Among the activities in this regard is the award of a national prize “ the National Pat on the Back” (“het Nationale Compliment”)¹¹. This prize has been made possible by the Rabobank.
- Utilizing the willingness of companies to invest in voluntary work through, among other things, the Partnership in Involvement Project (project Maatschap in betrokkenheid)

¹¹ Retrieved on 2.11.2007 from <http://www.rabobank.nl/particulieren/sponsoring/vrijwilligerswerk/hetnationalecompliment2006/>

- Promoting the outcome of UN International Year of Volunteers 2001 (IYV). The Ministry supported the program “Stap Twee” (“Step Two”) which started with NYV 2001 and run up to 2005. It aimed at increasing diversity in the voluntary sector and was implemented by the National Volunteer Centre, CIVIQ (now MOVISIE) and the Institute for Multicultural Development FORUM.

3.2.3 Quality enhancement

Action item to enhance the quality of voluntary work are:

- Stimulating pilot projects aimed at improving the coordination of the activities of organizations, local authorities and provinces
- Developing methods for better local authority voluntary sector policy
- Education, training and professional coaching of volunteers, operatives and managers of voluntary sector organizations (including already mentioned training centers)
- Certification, primarily for those volunteers who want to acquire experience and want to find work, for example benefit claimants, women with insufficient qualifications who want to return to work, and young people.
- Certification of organizations and local voluntary sector support points

3.2.4 Facet policy legislation and regulation

The position of volunteers in the spectrum of government policy and legislation is an ongoing area of attention. Voluntary work frequently impacts the realm of legislation and regulations relating to work and management.

4. Legal Position of Volunteer

Volunteers have a legal status as such in the Netherlands. Aspects of volunteering are partial covered by regulations on taxes and social welfare benefits.

4.1 Tax, Social Security and Law Implications

According to the Coordination Law on Social Insurance¹²:

- The Tax Authorities permit volunteers to receive an expense allowance tax free up to a maximum amount Euro 1.500 per year (and not more than Euro 150 per month). Up to this amount volunteers do not need to account for expanses¹³.

¹² Retrieved on 05.11.2007 from <http://www.vrijwilligerswerk.nl/web/show/id=45970>

¹³ Retrieved on 05.11.2007 from <http://www.belastingdienst.nl/particulier/vrijwilligers/>

- Over that amount, real volunteer expenses, for example phone calls, stamps and travel expenses etc. will generally be compensated tax-free as well. However, in these cases, the tax department will ask for an itemization of the costs. In cases of unjustified expenses, reimbursement will be considered as income and taxed as such.
- When a voluntary organization cannot afford the volunteers expenses, the volunteer can mention in his/her annual tax declaration and can, under certain conditions, obtain a tax reduction for this amount at the end of the fiscal year.

4.2 Welfare Protection of Volunteers Protection of Volunteers at Work

Although there are no legal provisions protecting volunteers at work, it is general practice among volunteer involving organizations to insure their volunteers against the risks of accident, illness or third party liability related to their volunteer activities. As there is no legal regulation on liability of board members of non-profit organizations, they insure themselves under what is called “Aansprakelijkheidsverzekering Voor Bedrijven”.

4.3 Volunteers and State Social Welfare Benefits

Volunteers are subject as individuals to the general rules concerning entitlement to state social welfare benefits. Their entitlement will depend on whether or not the voluntary activity undertaken affects any parallel recognized legal statues they may enjoy as student, unemployed, unfit to work or any other which entitles them to some form of social protection.

5. General Data on Volunteering

This chapter explores issues regarding participation in volunteering in the Dutch society.

5.1. Volunteering in the Netherlands in comparison to other European countries

First table presents volunteering in the Netherlands in comparison with other European countries. The table presents data gathered in three types of research, European Value Studies (EVS)- population 18 + years old, International Social Survey Programme (ISSP)- population 18+years old, European Social Survey (ESS)- population 16+ years old, in year 1981-2003.

Table 1.1 Volunteering in the Netherlands in comparison to other countries (percentage of population)

	EVS				Other research	
	1981	1990	1999/00	tendency	ISSP'98	ESS'02/03
Denmark	16	13	21	+	33	28

Germany	17	14	8	-	29	26
Netherlands	19	22	32	+	51	29
Belgium	18	19	22	0	.	23
France	15	16	14	0	58	19
Italy	14	13	17	0	24	5
Spain	18	7	9	-	22	7
Ireland	18	17	15	0	33	16
UK	16	13	36	+	37	23
Sweden	19	22	33	+	49	35

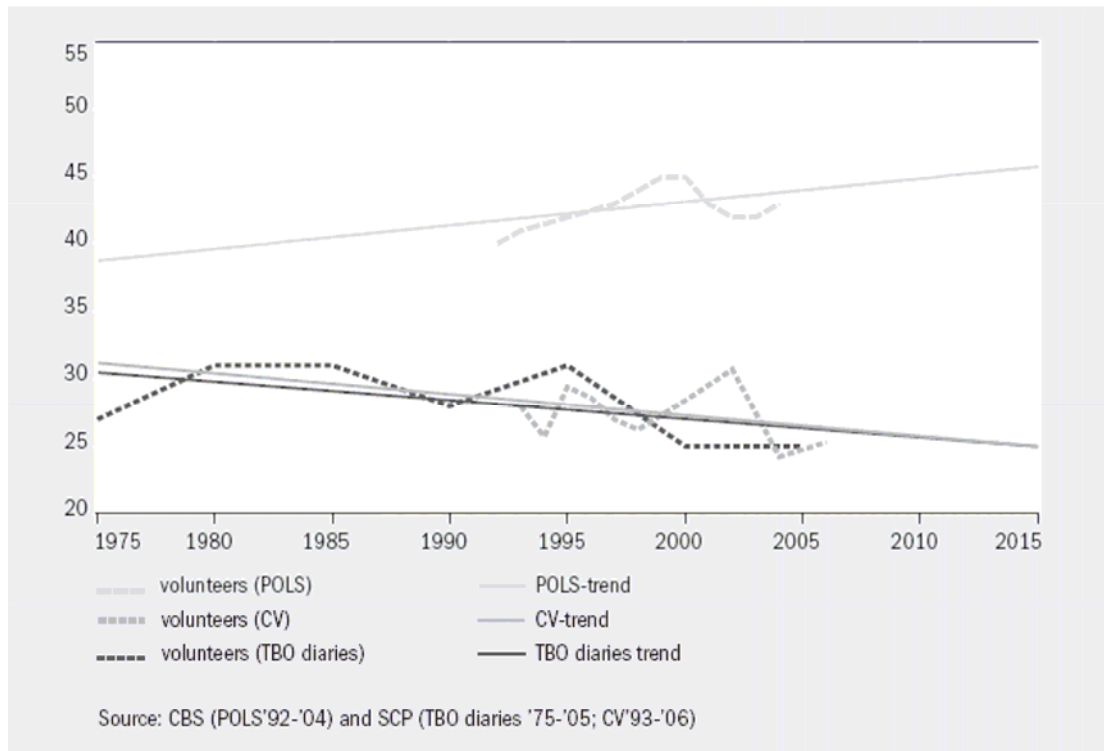
Source: EVS= European Value Studies (population 18 + years old), ISSP= International Social Survey Programme (population 18+ years old), ESS= European Social Survey (population 16+ years old)

The data indicates there are significant differences between countries (7% volunteering in Spain in 1990 and 36% in UK in 1990/00). As can be seen, volunteering in the Netherlands according to the data gathered in this research scores relatively high in comparison with other European countries.

5.2 Participation figures and quantitative forecast

The Socio Cultural Planning Bureau (SCP) has analyzed a large body of survey material in mapping out the trend in participation in voluntary work in recent decades. The outcome however, reveals sometimes unusual fluctuations and mutually conflicting trends. Based on what are probably the most reliable measurements, the trends have been extrapolated to 2015. In figure 1 the percentage of volunteers in that year is predicted on the basis of three sources. The first one is diary data from the TBO (Time Use Survey)¹⁴ for the period 1975- 2005. Two other forecasts have been added to this, based on surveys with a more frequent data collection over a shorter period: the Cultural Changes in the Netherlands survey (CV 1993-2006) and the Periodic Life Situation Statistics Survey (POLS 1992-2004).

¹⁴ Chapter 4.3 on page 10 explains details about each of the surveys.



Based on this analysis, and therefore without taking into account changed social factors (see Chapter 5) virtually no changes are expected in respect of this picture.

5.3 Participation figures volunteering and collective action

The following table (page 11) presents percentage of volunteers in years 1975-2006 (percentage of population) gathered in five types of research. All the data comes from Central Bureau Statistics (CBS).

The TBO (Time Use Survey) research was conducted by means of questionnaires where the respondents were to tell whether they in their free time did any unpaid work. The respondents did not have to indicate any particular time frame when they were performing voluntary activity nor if it was any kind of organized type of volunteering. The TBO research results are presented in tables: 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5.

The POLS (the Periodic Life Situation Statistics Survey) research included population 18 + years old and started in 1997 (the preceding figures come from Systematic Life Situation Survey (DLO)). The survey was based on a questionnaire where respondents had to tell whether they in the last 12 months performed any kind of activity in the field of: youth, school, church, health care, trade unions or other work organizations, political parties, action groups, organizations.

The GIN (Giving in the Netherlands), 18 + years old population, the questionnaire asking to indicate whether respondents in the last 12 months performed any kind of work that is separate from paid job, and is not for the benefit of volunteer themselves or their relatives, but for others, individual persons or organizations, and for which volunteer does not receive any salary.

The EVS (European Values Studies), 18+ yeas old population, conducted in the years 1981,1990 and 1999 where the respondents were given the list with 50 organizations and activities and asked if they are members of any of the organizations or participate in any of activities or did any kind of other voluntary work. The numbers presented here indicate the population that participates in at least one of the following activities: helping elderly, handicap or deprived people, activities in the file of education, art, music or other cultural activities, trade unions, profession organizations, environmental organizations, animal/nature protecting, or youth work (e.g. scouting, youth clubs).

The CV (the Cultural Changes in the Netherlands Survey, 1993-2006), population 16+ years old, questionnaire were respondents were asked if they perform any kind of volunteering that is unpaid work for the benefit of an organization, association or other type of institution. The numbers indicate respondents who do more than one hour per week of volunteering.

Collective Action – indicate a percentage of respondents who gave a positive answer for a question: “ have you participated within the last two years in any kind of organized collective activity which had national/local importance of had a connection with world’ problems such as poverty or hunger?” and “have you participated within the last two years in any action that was of a great importance for your village/town/province of for a particular group in your village/town/province?”

Table 1.2 Participation figures volunteering and collective action in the Netherlands (in percentage of population)

	1975	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Volunteers																				
TBO	27	31	31	28	.	.	.	.	31	.	.	.	.	25	.	.	.	.	25	.
POLS	.	.	.	.	.	40	41	.	.	.	.43	44	45	45	43	42	42	43	.	.
GIN	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	36	.	.	35	37	.	43	.	41	.	.
EVS	.	19	.	22	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	32	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
CV	.	.	.	.	.	.	28	26	29	29	27	26	.	28	.	31	.	24	.	25
Participants in collective actions																				
CV - local action cases	.	25	24	.	22	27	28	25	31	29	28	26	.	26	.	28	.	19	.	21
CV -(inter) national	.	12	20	.	12	14	14	14	14	14	11	12	.	9	.	12	.	10	.	10

Source: Centraal Buro Statistics (CBS)

5.4 Participation figures voluntary activities in organizations

Table 1.3 indicates the participation in voluntary activities in organizations grouped into seven categories. Those organizations have very different aims, but the common factor is that in each of them, there is some kind of organized volunteering performed. The informal help (such as help a farm, handicapped persons, elderly etc) is indicated in brackets. The strong decline in volunteering which was visible in table 1.2 is also visible here.

Table 1.3 Volunteering per sector, population 15-74 year old, 1985-2005 (in percentage)

Volunteering in organizations dealing with:	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Culture, sport, hobby's	24	20	26	15	15
Children and youth	19	17	20	13	13
Religious	9	8	9	7	7
Politics and idealistic aims	5	5	6	4	4
Trade unions	4	3	4	2	2
Women's organizations	3	3	2	2	1
Various aid organizations	4	4	4	3	4
At least one of items below (as volunteering)	45	40	46	35	33
handicapped persons elderly etc)	(14)	(12)	(12)	(8)	(8)

Source: SCP (TBO research) - see page 10

5.5 Volunteering in age groups

The following table 1.4 presents volunteering in different age groups. It was conducted by means of questionnaires asking whether they in their free time did any unpaid work. The respondents did not have to indicate any particular time frame when they were performing voluntary activity nor if it was any kind of organized type of volunteering.

The results show that there is a lot of fluctuation as far as volunteering in different age groups in the time frame from 1975 until 2005 is concerned.

Table 1.4 volunteering according to age groups, 1975-2005 (in percentage per age group)

Volunteers' age	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
15-19	23	18	19	16	18	16	11
20-24	24	32	25	16	17	4	16
25-29	24	27	25	24	23	8	19
30-34	23	23	32	26	27	23	22
35-39	31	35	36	32	36	29	17
40-44	27	37	42	31	42	26	26
45-49	35	34	34	33	37	33	29
50-54	33	40	30	38	40	23	29
55-59	20	33	42	27	30	35	28
60-64	26	42	38	43	37	36	37
65-69	23	29	29	38	40	41	34
70-74	42	30	28	40	37	32	33

Total	27	31	31	28	31	25	25
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Source SCP (TBO research)- see page 10

The research conducted “ Giving in the Netherlands” ¹⁵ concludes that the older generation is more involved in volunteering than the younger generation. The elderly people are willing to spend more time and also more money on volunteering. The reason of that could be associated with their stronger bond with the church, and higher level of social trust. The younger generation has in average higher education level and more post-materialistic life pattern. Those are however only speculations and cannot be taken as taken as proof factors. Changes in the society and life style and its influence on volunteering will be discussed further in chapter 5.

5.6 Time spent on volunteering

The following table presents time spent on volunteering per age groups (volunteers who spend minimum 1 hour a week on any kind of voluntary activity) 1994-2006 (in percentage according to age (in brackets) and hours)

Table 1.5 Time spent on volunteering

Volunteers' age	1994		1996		1998		2000		2004		2006	
	16-34	(19)	5,7	(20)	5,1	(18)	4,2	(19)	5,4	(16)	4,9	(20)
35-54	(30)	5,6	(34)	6,0	(32)	5,7	(34)	4,9	(26)	6,0	(27)	5,1
55-74	(30)	8,6	(34)	8,4	(31)	6,6	(34)	8,3	(32)	8,2	(32)	7,6
Total (16-74)	(26)	6,4	(29)	6,5	(27)	5,6	(29)	6,1	(25)	6,6	(27)	5,7

Source: TBO research (see page 10)

This research was conducted again by means of questionnaire where the respondents were to tell whether they in their free time did any unpaid work. The respondents did not have to indicate any particular time frame when they were performing voluntary activity nor if it was any kind of organized type of volunteering.

5.7 Volunteering and ethnic groups

Netherlands has a multicultural society where about one third of the population is of other than West European origin. The research on volunteering would not be complete without including ethnic groups in this report. The following table presents volunteering according to ethnicity (in comparison with the autochthon Dutch population), in city resident's 15- 64 years old, 2004/2005 (in percentage).

¹⁵ The research was conducted by Bakkers and Ruiter, cited by Dekker (2007,p.37)

Table 1.6 Volunteering in ethnic groups

Organization type:	Dutch	Antilleans	Surinamers	Turks	Moroccans
Sport association	12	5	4	3	4
Free time organization (e.g. hobby club, music association)	6	2	1	1	0
Local associations	4	1	1	2	2
Trade union, work association	1	0	1	0	0
Organizations for foreigners	0	1	1	2	1
Political party or other political association	0	0	0	1	0
Religious association	5	5	6	4	2
Environmental organization	3	1	0	0	1
Other organization	8	4	4	3	2
At least one from the above	31	18	16	13	11
Other type of volunteering	17	8	8	7	8
Average one hour per week voluntary work	25	11	10	10	9
At last one from the above	41	23	22	19	17

Source: Socio Cultural Planning Bureau

5.8 Economic value of volunteering in the Netherlands

Economical value of voluntary work was calculated according to the minimum time spent on volunteering as if volunteers were doing this work as a paid job (minimal pay).

According to TBO research (see page10), 25 % the population 16-74 years old, spent in 2005 approximately 4.5 hours per week on voluntary work. Consequently (25% from 12.3 million=) 3.1 million volunteers working for 52 weeks, 4.5 hours amounts to 724.4 hours of volunteering. This would make 421.000 full time jobs. The minimum pay for adults for one full time job costs € 20.000 (including employer contribution). 421.000 full time jobs multiplied by €20.000 amounts to €8.4 billion. If this sum was added to the GDP, the GDP would increase from €505.6 billion up to €514 billion. This means that the contribution of voluntary work to GDP (in 2005) amounts to 1.5 %.

6. Future of volunteering

As mentioned before, SCP analyzed a number of surveys and statistical data with the view of forecasting in which direction volunteering is likely to develop.

Taking into consideration all the factors and research mentioned previously, this chapter discusses trends and developments in Dutch society that might have influence on volunteering in the future.

6.1 Education level

The link between the education and volunteering is a significant and stable factor. According to the SCP, the Dutch with higher education (university or higher professional education) do approximately twice as much voluntary work as their compatriots with lower educational level¹⁶.

The education level corresponds to active citizenship, including volunteering. The education level of the Dutch society is expected to remain stable in the next years. The current trend in the society is that people stay longer in educational institutions and finish with higher qualifications. In the up-coming years, the percentage of people with lower education (most underrepresented group in volunteering) will slightly decrease and the percentage of higher educated people will remain stable.

6.2 Ageing population

According to the predictions of Central Statistical Office (CBS) in 2020 the number of Dutch youngsters under 20 will decrease by 5 %. The number of 65 years old will increase by 39% in comparison to 2005. With the view of this drastically increasing aging population and decreasing younger population, the group “in between” will have to work so their tax money could provide retirement allowances. This might have some significant influence on volunteering since this group “in between”, namely consisting of 35-49 years old, has been involved for a long time already in a lot of volunteering sectors (such as sport and school activities, youth and child care). Consequently, if this group of people is full time employed, they will have less time for volunteering.

The seniors and young parents belong to the most active social group. Parents are mostly involved in volunteering till their fifties. The important factor is that the educational level of 55 years old is still increasing. Another important development concerning ageing population is that people nowadays stay longer professionally active.

In the last years more and more 55-65 years old stayed at work because the Dutch pensions systems are no longer as attractive as they used to be.

According to SCP if 90 % of 50-69 years old do paid work, this will lead to a decrease in volunteering from approximately 3.2 hours per week to 2.3 hours.

¹⁶ Dekker, Hart, Faulk (2007, p.50-51)

The total share of this group in volunteering will decrease from 40% to 33%. Parents with paid jobs chose other activities in their free time than volunteering. People with paid jobs and responsibilities will tend to do more spontaneous, incidental volunteering. The decrease in serious, intensive volunteering is already visible (Dekker, Hart, Faulk, 2007, p.48-50)

6.3 Changes in household

The Dutch society is becoming more individualistic and this trend is reflected in changes in household. The number of persons per household decreased in the past decade, and consequently the number of households increased significantly. One out of three households consist of one person (in big cites half of the households) and the number is increasing. One out of three households consists of two persons.

According to statistical data of SCP in the upcoming years, the number of people living alone will increase. It is expected that in 2015, in comparison to 10 years earlier, will increase by 2,4%, the percentage of single parents will increase by 0,4 %, the percentage of people living together (concubine) will decrease by 1,3%. Those changes will be noticeable in all sector of volunteering. A Dutch person who has a family does relatively more voluntary work; people living alone and single parents are less involved in volunteering. According to the researches however, those differences tend to decrease (Dekker, Hart, Faulk, 2007, p.52).

6.4 Increasing multiculturalism

The percentage of the Dutch population with foreign origin has increased in the past decade and will continue rising¹⁷. According to the predictions the increase between 2010 and 2020 will reach 20% where the most significant increase would be by the second generation of non-West European foreigners (+26%) and the first generation of West European foreigners (+23%). It is estimated that approximately one out of eight of the Dutch citizens in 2015 will be of non West European origin (now about 6% of the population is non-West European). Second generation of Moroccans belongs to the fastest growing ethnical group. Moreover, the second generation of asylum-immigrants will also increase significantly in the up coming years. This factor is not only determined by the fact that foreign women have more children in comparison to autochthon women, but also that lifetime span of expatriate women is shorter.

Currently, there is approximately 1 to 1.2 million non -Western immigrants in the Netherlands. In 2015 this number will increase up to 1.9 million. Half of those people will be born in the Netherlands. Moreover, the concentration of immigrants in big cities will further increase. The youngsters in big cities with foreign (non-Western) origin belong to the majority already. This fact is going to have a significant impact on school population and job market in those cities.

¹⁷ Dekker (2007,p50-53)

6.4.1 Impact of multiculturalism on volunteering

As mentioned before, the Dutch with a ethnic origin are largely underrepresented as far as volunteering is concerned. Moreover they concentrate their social activities mostly in their own ethnic group. The two largest ethnic groups are Moroccans and Turks and they have the lowest participation rate in volunteering. The trend of concentrating social activities on their own ethnic group remains in second generation unchanged. Also, the marriages between Moroccans or Turks and autochthons are only in 10%. The asylum seekers have more contact with the Dutch society than Moroccan or Turks. In many cases, autochthons also keep distance from the other ethnic groups. The concentration of emigrants in particular neighborhoods in big cities generates spatial segregation, which will also increase in the future. For volunteering organization this means those ethnic groups are difficult to reach. Language barriers and unfamiliarity with volunteering seem to be big barriers for foreigners with different cultural background (Dekker, Hart, Faulk, 2007, p.53).

6.4.2 The Netherlands in INVOLVE project

The Netherlands participated in INVOLVE project, launched in 2006 by European Volunteer Centre (CEV).

CEV initiated the project with the view of answering the question “How can volunteering be better used in order to facilitate integration needed as a consequence of migration. The aim of the project was to explore innovative solutions of social integration and active participation. The seven participating countries included in the project, set up a national expert group in the field which collected the research data feeding into INVOLVE national data.

The Netherlands contributed to the INVOLVE project, by providing the action research on the link between integration and volunteering, producing a national report¹⁸, and some main findings of the different reports (CEV, 2006).

6.4 Lifestyle and cultural developments

Changes in society are manifested through life style change and, especially the way people spend their leisure time.

Every 5 years SCP conducts a research on how the Dutch spend their free time. According to the most recent survey, it can be observed that the life in Dutch society is getting busier and more restless. This tendency is manifested in switching between diverse activities and in accomplishing actions in short time (also in their free time). The number of hours spent weekly on compulsory activities (work, care, education) increased from 43.6 in 1985, to 47.4 in 2000, to 48.6 in 2005. This increase is mainly caused by the fact that paid work takes more time, from approximately 19 hours in 1985, 25 hours in 2000 and 26 hours in 2005. The working week remains the same

¹⁸ The report can be access at www.involve-europe.eu

only the number of the Dutch people has grown, because women entered the job market. Approximately four out of ten Dutch persons (26-65 years old) combine 12 hours paid work with taking care tasks. The decreased amount of free time is spent more intensively and people tend to spend more money on it as well (Dekker, Hart, Faulk, 2007, p.52).

Television is considered to be one of the biggest factors influencing decline in volunteering (Putnam 1995 cited in Dekker, p.55). If this also counts for the Internet is not known yet, but it seems that the effects are less “harmful” because of the social dimension of Internet. Nevertheless, it has been noticed that there is a clear shift from watching TV to Internet use. For the first time since rise of television, time spent on watching TV dropped by 1.5 hours (down to 10.8 per week), while Internet using doubled. Youngsters spent equally as much time on watching TV as on Internet. In the future use of Internet will keep on increasing. Due to advancing technology, media use will amplify individualization. On the other hand, Internet is become more and more a medium for volunteering. There are already internet voluntary organisations where activities and meetings are arranged through internet and face-to-face meetings are rare.

Other changes in society that have influence on volunteering include increased number of commercial free time centers. The individualization leads to people will tend to devote their free time to activities they can identify with (Dekker, Hart, Faulk, 2007, p.52).

6.5 Secularization

Secularization belongs to the most important changes in society in the last decennium. According to the survey, going to the church corresponds with volunteering (Dekker, Hart, Faulk 2007, p.56). Since the second half of the century, there has been fast and massive secularization trend in the Netherlands. This has significant impact on volunteering since the church used to be a big stimulates prompting volunteering. Secularization implies disappearance of important recruitment and mobilizing setting therefore it has a negative impact on volunteering.

6.6 Social trends and their impact on volunteering

	impact	comments
Rise in education level	+ +	More potential volunteers (esp. administrative functions)
Broadening of post materialism	+	High prosperity level and presence of material provisions broadens appreciation of intangible aspects and new forms of social commitment.
Professionalism	+/-	On the one hand more adequate and efficient response to needs, more quality control and more transparency, on the other hand, a danger of an overly instrumental approach, bureaucratization, greater distance

		from/dropping out by volunteers.
Ageing	+/-	In the short-term potential increases, possibly slowed by raising of retirement age, but less attraction for young people.
Social Support Act (Wmo)	+/-	More recognition and support versus more mutual competition, dependence on grant criteria and higher standards.
Successful emancipation of population groups	+/-	Problematic for “pillarised” organizations which have (historical) links with emancipation movements, on the other hand, expansion of volunteering to other fields.
Depillarisation (ending of traditional societal divisions along religious and ideological lines)	-/+	No automatic links with organizations, but also less “in crowd” and more openness to the outside world.
Increasing multiculturalism	+/-	Currently relatively little volunteering in ethnic concentration areas, in the future, rise in own organizations and also gradual influx of general voluntary work.
Shift from secondary to tertiary organizations	-/+	Hiring in of “issue advocates” rather than being active oneself, not a training school for democratic skills, dominance of the better educated, often a good deal of influence on politics and public opinion.
“Informatisation”/new media (Internet)	-/+	On the one hand, reduces direct meetings (which are important for recruitment and control), on the other hand, generates new contacts and opportunities (breaking down in-crowd thinking, the world of the young, broader recruitment, greater reach, groundbreaking initiatives).
Popularity of issues	-/+	Current affairs more dominant in setting the volunteering agenda, more rapid switches of interest.
Individualization/informatisation/intensification	-/+	Group needs less automatically regarded as primary, voluntary work more customized (for the participants), creating better match of competences/ interests.
More and more commercial providers in leisure market	-	Increasing more attractive forms of time use in addition to voluntary work, business community assumes tasks.
Less free time	--	Declining participation especially during the busiest period of life (from 20 till 50 years old), shifting attention towards capital-intensive participation forms (donorship)
Secularization	--	Disappearance of important recruitment and mobilization setting, compensation by alternatives doubtful.

Source: Dekker, Hart, Faulk, 2007,p.116

7. Conclusions and Outlook

The Netherlands has a thriving civil society in which volunteering has always been considered a foundation stone¹⁹. Volunteering however is also subject to the influence of broader social changes. The described circumstances and prognosis are just a rough estimation; nevertheless people working in volunteering sector, now and in the near future, need to take them into consideration. Combination of all the factors mentioned in previous chapters will have impact on volunteering. The growing number of high-educated elderly people brings potential volunteers on one hand; on the other hand however, the expectations are subdued to the possible extended age of retirement. Furthermore, the profile of volunteers will also change; ageing population means there will be more elderly volunteers. Older people volunteer more frequently and spend more time doing so. This would obviously have a positive impact on volunteering because it means it will compensate for the reducing participation of young people.

The higher education level will have positive influence on volunteering, there will be more interest in voluntary work, but it might also have unfavorable impact since, as already mentioned, according to the surveys, highly educated people might have more sophisticated ways of spending their free time and, in general, are busier.

Increased multiculturalism of society in the upcoming years means that immigrants will enter volunteering sector, this will concern both, their own ethnic group organizations and national organizations. This gives the volunteering sector an opportunity to facilitate an intercultural dialogue and diminish ethnic barriers. The new governmental policy, Social Support Act mentioned in chapter 2, will give more recognition and support to volunteering.

In conclusion the Dutch society will be acquainted with new kinds of volunteering; like the Internet volunteering. This means the voluntary activities and organisations will not always be as visible to society as it is now. On the other hand it's a medium which can increase the voluntary participation of young people.

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¹⁹ CEV (2006) INVOLVE, final project report, p.17

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