

2.4 Youth volunteering at national level

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National Programme for Youth Volunteering

As mentioned before there is no national programme for volunteering in the Netherlands. The government does support volunteering activities in general but municipalities and ngo's are responsible for the execution of volunteering efforts and work.

Funding

Social service [Central government](#) stimulates young people to use their talents in providing an amount of their time to do social service and with it to make civil society stronger. By doing social service young people can learn something and at the same time contribute to society. Government finds it important that all young people are able to serve a period of time in social service, no matter their education, background or stage of life. After consulting young people about their views and ideas on how such social service period should look like, pilot projects have started in 2018 to experiment with social service. The [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#) is responsible for the development of social service. [ZonMW](#), the Netherlands Organization for Health Research and Development, has assessed the subsidy requests for experimental projects for social service, with the help of a panel of young people and experts. The projects should be compliant to the wishes of young people. That was an important criterium in selecting the projects, and young people's assessment was decisive in granting the subsidies. 38 projects have been chosen that started from the middle of September 2018. About 13,000 young people went ahead with a period of social service. There was lots of choice in the kind of social service. Young people could work in care, sports or culture, in rural areas and even at sea.

Characteristics of youth volunteering

[Statistics Netherlands \(CBS\)](#) published the research paper [Vrijwilligerswerk: activiteiten, duur en motieven](#)

(Arends and Schmeets, July 2018) (Voluntary work: activities, duration and motives). Over a period of 6 years (2012-2017) the response of 45,695 persons was available and analyzed. Almost half (48.5 percent) of the Dutch population of 15 years and older said in 2017 that they had been active as a volunteer for an organization or union, at least once a year. This percentage is fairly constant since 2012. About 50% of all young people are involved in voluntary work. Most volunteers are active in sports clubs, schools, youth organizations, religious or philosophical organizations and in care and nursing. Volunteers spend an average of 4.5 hours a week doing voluntary work, with most hours (4.9) being spent in youth organizations and the least hours (1.5) in the neighbourhood.

Support to young volunteers

In some cases young people get compensated for their voluntary work by the organisation they work for. Also, under certain conditions they are exempted from paying income tax. Information about working as a volunteer and taxes can be found on the website of the [Tax and customs administration](#) (Belastingdienst).

Quality Assurance (QA)

A social service programme for young people is developed in 2018 and described in this section under 'Funding'. The [Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport](#) has ordered a research office to monitor the developments of the experimental projects that have started within the frame of this programme. They want to appoint the operative elements in the big variety of projects. In the beginning of 2019 the amount of projects will be extended. Mid 2019 it will be decided how the social service programme will continue, based on the experience during the pilot projects. For their contribution during social service young people can get a volunteer fee. They can also get a certificate or references, which can be helpful in finding a job.

Target groups

At national level Dutch government has made efforts to promote the opportunities and benefits of volunteering among all young people. There are no measures taken to enhance the participation of specific groups of young people in voluntary activities.