

**The  
Roles and Contributions of Volunteers  
Globally:  
Passing on the Tradition to Future  
Generations**

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## **THE ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF VOLUNTEERS GLOBALLY: PASSING ON THE TRADITION TO FUTURE GENERATIONS**

ì...If men living in democratic countries had no right and no inclination to associate for political purposes, their independence might be in great jeopardy....whereas if they never acquired the habit of forming associations in ordinary life, civilization itself would be endangered. A people among whom individuals lost the power of achieving great things single-handed, without acquiring the means of producing them by united exertions, would soon relapse into barbarism...In democratic countries the science of associations is the mother science; the progress of all the rest depends upon the progress it has made.î Alexis de Tocqueville *Democracy in America* ( Volume II, Book V. [1835] translated by Henry Reeve and published by Alfred A. Knopf 1945.)

The art of association or voluntary action has been associated with preserving democraciesñ a form of elected government controlled by citizens. Nearly two centuries ago, de Tocqueville argued that the art of associating in a democracy was the only way citizens could maintain their freedom from an all powerful, even if benevolent, government. Associating allowed for the free flow of ideas, the ways in which citizens together could enlarge their hearts and minds and accomplish great deeds. While he recognized the power of political and business associations, he thought that it was the moral and intellectual associations as he defined them that deserved attention. For these associations enlarged the heart and helped individuals to understand their reciprocal influence upon one another. Beyond such influence, the wealth of voluntary or nonprofit organizations represent and unleash the creativity of the citizenry. Most of this activity takes place in the nonprofit, voluntary, independent or third sector of nations around the world, the sector of the neighborhood and community and just beyond the family. In John Gardnerís words:

The sector enhances our creativity, enlivens our communities, nurtures individual responsibility, stirs life at the grassroots, and reminds us that we are born free.... Itís a sector in which youíre allowed to pursue truth, even if youíre going in the wrong direction; to experiment, even if youíre bound to fail; to map unknown territory, even if you get lost; a sector in which we are committed to alleviating misery and redressing grievances, to giving rein to the mindís curiosity and the soulís longing, to seeking beauty where we can and defending truth where we must, to honoring the worthy and smiting the rascals (with every one free to define worth and rascality), to combating the ancient

impulse to hate..., to finding cures and consoling the incurable, to preparing for tomorrowís crisis and preserving yesterdayís wisdom...<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John W. Gardner, ìForewordî in Brian OíConnell, *Powered by Coalition: The Story of Independent Sector*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997.

Volunteering time for a variety of purposes or caring and sharing has been a part of most societies throughout human history. The teachings of most major religions have supported care of the elderly, the widows and orphans, and the poor and otherwise dependent. While most societies know these activities are ongoing along with other mutually supportive activities designed to build and support community, little attention has been paid to the role and contributions of volunteers. Governments are least likely to report on the role of citizens in improving community life, in finding new and creative ways to solve social and community problems, nor of the power of organized citizens to redress wrongs or to change public policy to improve the quality of life of communities and nations. One of the purposes of the United Nations Year of Volunteers is intended to address this gap. And none too soon, and hopefully not too late.

With the end of the Cold War, more attention is being paid to the development and preservation of democracy. If de Tocqueville was right, this means attending to the important role that citizens play in improving the quality of life in communities and of nations. Governments, including the United Nations, produce statistics on the roles and contributions of the government and market sectors to society, but until very recently, little has been known about the contributions of citizens to society. We are indebted to our eastern and central European colleagues, most notably Adam Michnik, the founder of Solidarity in Poland, and Václav Havel, the president of the Czech republic for coining the term "civil society", by which they meant that public space in democratic societies between government and the market where citizens could debate ideas, serve great causes, research, engage in political and social action, advocate and or protest, sing in choirs, associate in diverse kinds of organizations, serve others in need, educate, recreate, and generally participate and contribute to the life of their communities. In the voluntary research society in which I serve as elected president, The International Society for Third Sector Research, we call this space the third sector. President Havel defines it as the third leg of a stool whose seat represents the whole society, and the legs represent the market, government and the third sector.

This third sector is represented by various names including the nonprofit sector, the voluntary sector, the independent sector, the philanthropic sector or the social sector. Its lack of a name until twenty-five years ago in the United States provides ample evidence of its invisibility. Essentially, this "people's sector", as a colleague of mine likes to call it, is really where community is formed and forged, where new ideas get heard and debated, new social programs are tried, where much independent research and education are conducted, where publications and information are disseminated, where the voices of the powerless are heard along with those of the powerful, where informal and formal time is given by citizens for various causes—arts and culture, education, health, social services, recreation, religious celebrations—for the sublime as well as the ridiculous. The size of this space depends much on the level of involvement by citizens and has become an indicator of the strength of a democracy.

On a lighter note, in that same year, 1975, Erma Bombeck, a syndicated columnist and author wrote an article about a lost civilization. She reported that she dreamt that all the volunteers had left on a ship because they were upset about the growing lack of compassion in the country. As she watched them sail away, she realized what their loss would mean. There was no one to help in hospitals, to entertain the children. Homes for the elderly were silent. Social

agencies closed; organizations raising money to cure diseases shut down. Schools no longer offered field trips for the children or teachers aides to help the teachers. There were no longer boy scouts, girls scouts, Big Brothers or Big Sisters programs, or little leagues or sports of any kind. Children were no longer visited in nurseries, and there were no longer flowers on the altars of churches, or Sunday School teachers, or choirs or bands. The symphony halls and museums closed down for lack of volunteers . She concluded this nightmare with the statement: "I fought in my sleep to regain a glimpse of the ship of volunteers just one more time. It was to be my last glimpse of civilization...as we were meant to be."<sup>2</sup>

Much of the invisibility of volunteers and this third sector occurred with the rise of centralized governments throughout most of the twentieth century. Even though people continued to associate, at least in democracies, and this third sector continued to grow in partnership with government in many countries, it became more invisible over time. The way of measuring economies, the gross domestic product, for the most part did not count its contributions to the economy, nor the voluntary time contributed to citizens in a variety of activities designed to improve communities. In fact, in the United States, a private commission in cooperation with government, the Commission on Private Philanthropy and Public Needs, was formed to look at the impact on private contributions to the public good. When it published its findings in 1975, it declared that what was known about the third sector made up of nonprofit associations serving a public purpose "remains something of a terra incognita, barely explored in terms of its inner dynamics and motivations, and its social, economic and political relations to the rest of the world. As on ancient maps, its boundaries faded off into extensions of the imagination, and a monster or two may lurk in surrounding areas.... Yet it is within this institutional domain that nearly all philanthropic input—giving and volunteering—is transformed into philanthropic output—goods and services for ultimate beneficiaries."<sup>3</sup> In the United States, the findings of this Commission led to a new infrastructure, new research on the this third sector, and new educational programs. More recently, these efforts have been taken up in Europe and other countries around the world.

But most of this effort in many countries has not been funded by government, but rather by private sources. Today there are still very few countries that regularly collect and report data on either nonprofit organizations or on volunteers. In its statement on the role of volunteering in social development, the Commission for Social Development of the United Nations Economic and Social Council stated:

...Volunteering constitutes an enormous reservoir of skills, energy and local knowledge which can assist Governments in carrying out more targeted, efficient, participatory and transparent public programs and policies. However, it is unusual for volunteering to be recognized as a strategic resource that can be positively influenced by public policy and even rarer for it to be factored into

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<sup>2</sup>Erma Bombeck, "Without Volunteers, A Lost Civilization" in Brian O'Connell, *America's Voluntary Spirit*. New York: The Foundation Center, 1983.

<sup>3</sup>Commission on Private Philanthropy and Public Needs, *Giving in America: Toward a Stronger Voluntary Sector*. Washington, D. C., 1975, p. 31.

national and international development strategies....The International Year of Volunteers (2001) offers a unique opportunity in bridging the gap between the acknowledgment of a long-standing tradition on the one hand, and a recognition of its potential as a major asset for promoting social development on the other.<sup>4</sup>

That brings us to the topic for today. What do we know about the role and contributions of volunteers in various nations? How can volunteering be increased and its importance to communities recognized? How do we pass on the tradition of service to community to the next generation? This paper will address five major points:

## **I. The Growth or at Least the Scope of Volunteering in Various Countries**

In an era of globalization and democratization taking place in many nations around the world, many governments have realized that they alone cannot provide all services and that citizen participation and initiative is important in the provision of many services, in maintaining community, and in building mutual trust and social solidarity. What once was invisible—volunteering— or the voluntary gift of time to a variety of causes to serve a public and social purposes—is rapidly being recognized as the glue that helps hold societies together.

We have growing evidence that such activity—volunteering and nonprofit associations—are growing around the world. Lester M. Salamon, director of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, has argued that we are in the midst of a "global associational revolution" that is one of the important characteristics of societies in the late twentieth century as the development of the powerful nation-state was in the late nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> He, along with colleagues in many countries, are mapping this sector and more recently volunteers and their value in various economies. We started such work in the United States with the first publication of *Dimensions of the Independent Sector* (now the *Nonprofit Almanac*) in 1985.<sup>6</sup> In another effort, scholars have collected data on membership and volunteering in the European Values and World Values Surveys, since 1980. Some other countries have conducted surveys of volunteers to celebrate the United Nations International Year of Volunteers. While some of the figures vary in different surveys, these data that I will present here are illustrative of the amount of volunteering going on in various nations.

What is the definition of volunteering? Definitions are important, because in some countries, my own for example, we have some programs such as the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps where a small stipend is paid during the year or years in service. In both cases a

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<sup>4</sup>Report of the Commission for Social Development, December 2000. United Nations publication, Sales No. E/CN.5/32001/6 Annex, p.3-4.

<sup>5</sup>Lester M. Salamon, "The Rise of the Nonprofit Sector," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.73, No.3 (July/August 1994), 111-24.

<sup>6</sup>See for example: Virginia Hodgkinson and Murray S. Weitzman, *The Nonprofit Almanac 1996-97*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996.

small grant is given at the end of service that can be put towards education. While these programs are very important and results show that people who enter these programs do continue actively in volunteering after these programs, their service is not considered volunteering in the purest sense. Volunteering means conducting work for no pay. It is, however, acceptable for volunteers to have their out-of-pocket expenses, such as travel and meals, paid while doing this work. Paying for such expenses allows people with limited financial resources to participate. Another characteristic of volunteering is that individuals give their time freely; they are not required to volunteer. And finally, people who volunteer provide benefits to others, not simply to themselves or to their direct family members. In other words, volunteering can be done for friend, the community, the environment, the school, etc.

According to a new toolkit prepared for the United Nations, there are four types of volunteering: The first is mutual aid. This involves self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, or community groups in countries like India that jointly manage resources such as water or forests. The second type is philanthropy of service to others or the community as a whole. This involves activities like tutoring or mentoring, teaching or caring for children. Much of this volunteering is done through voluntary organizations. For example, the Plunket Society, provides volunteer services to nurture and support children and families. This organization uses volunteers to improve children's health. The third type of volunteering is campaigning and advocacy. These activities involve people who advocate for a variety of causes to save the environment, to get legislation to help people with disabilities; to increase public housing, or to ban land mines. And the fourth type of volunteering is participation. This includes people serving on committees in their community, as representatives to their local governments, or as members of commissions trying to find options to solve community problems. So the range of volunteering is very broad.<sup>7</sup>

Chart one here

Volunteer rates vary by nation. In Western Europe, volunteering ranges from 56 percent in Sweden to 14 percent in Portugal. The Northern European countries and Great Britain have the highest rates of volunteer activity. In the transitional democracies of Eastern Europe and Russia, the highest rates of volunteering are found in Slovakia, 51 percent, the Czech Republic, 33 percent, and Slovenia, 29 percent. In countries where it has been a difficult transition to democracy and a market economy, the volunteer rate is much lower: in Russia, 8 percent and in the Ukraine 13 percent. In Latin America, Columbia has a high rate of volunteering (48 percent). Among developed nations, Australia reports 19 percent of its adult population volunteers. The United States has a volunteer rate of 66 percent on the international study, 56 percent on its own commissioned surveys.<sup>8</sup> These reports reveal a very different pattern of volunteering by nation. In some studies, informal volunteering, those kinds of activities such as

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<sup>7</sup>Alan Dingle, ed. *Measuring Volunteering: A Practical Toolkit*, A joint project of Independent Sector and United Nations Volunteers. Washington, D.C.: Independent Sector, 2001.

<sup>8</sup>See Saxon-Harrold, Susan K.E. *Giving and Volunteering in the United States*. Washington, D.C.: Independent Sector, 1999.

mutual aid, self-help, helping a sick friend outside of an organizational framework are included. In other surveys, such as in Australia, only formal volunteering for an organization is included, so these differences can affect how the rate of volunteering is tabulated in various countries.

## **II. The Roles and Functions of Volunteers**

Volunteers perform numerous functions in many areas of community life. They feed the homeless, visit the sick, tutor the children, provide services to settle refugees, offer help at hospitals, counsel and care for abused children and women, provide care and activities for the elderly. They support the arts, and run recreational activities, advocate for causes, monitor government and business, serve as members of committees and boards, do office work, assist teachers, provide health care assistance, raise money for various organizations and causes, and found new organizations to address new needs. Among the basic functions identified for volunteers and the nonprofit sector delineated by the Commission on Private Philanthropy and Public Needs are:

(1) *Coming forth with new ideas and ways of providing services.* Volunteers initiate new ideas and form new organizations. Innovation is difficult for governments unless there is broad public support, but nonprofit organizations can demonstrate new ideas that may work.

(2) *Developing public policy.* Voluntary organizations can help to develop new public policy through think tanks and advocacy groups armed with new information.

(3) *Supporting minority or local interests.* Voluntary organizations can support groups and interests that may not be supported by the majority population. This includes the interests of minority groups, or special services for religious or ethnic groups.

(4) *Providing services the government is barred by law to provide.* In the United States, the U.S. cannot engage in religious functions under the Constitution. Therefore, all religious services must be provided by the religious sector.

(5) *Monitoring government.* Nonprofit groups monitor whether government is carrying out its duties and obligations prescribed under law. Such actions lead to better and more transparent government.

(6) *Overseeing the market.* Voluntary organizations sometimes compete with business in direct services and offer services that businesses do not engage in. But they also build organizations that assure quality in consumer products, and more transparency in business. In some cases voluntary organizations can carry out activities to protect consumers that government cannot do until there is sufficient public support. The work of voluntary organizations in recent decades to expose the dangers of tobacco and tobacco advertising did not get attention by government because of powerful corporations until there was sufficient information and evidence to force governmental attention.

(7) *Bringing the sectors together.* Voluntary organizations can bring government and business together on occasion to pursue public purposes. This has happened in the environment where private organizations have secured support from business to buy land for conservation. At a later time these lands can be donated to government. Voluntary organizations serve as catalysts and convenors between business, government, and the nonprofit sector to pursue public purposes.

(8) *Providing aid abroad.* Private voluntary organizations can provide aid abroad where governments may not be welcome. Such work has been going throughout the last century in organizations from many countries through organizations like OXFAM, Care, Catholic Relief Services, Doctors Without Borders and others.

(9) *Encouraging and building active citizenship.* Voluntary organizations provide outlets for individuals to serve and help others. In urban societies, they provide opportunities for individuals to get involved. As such they provide an arena for citizen involvement and action which is important to a healthy democracy.<sup>1</sup>

These functions are found in various measure in many countries, but in larger measure in democracies. To some commentators, volunteering is crucial to functioning democracies. The

more citizens involve themselves as volunteers in all areas, the closer they come to making the ideals of democracy real.<sup>2</sup>

This brings us to the question about where volunteers are most active in various countries. Volunteers perform different roles depending on the type of government. In mixed welfare states, such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, a substantial proportion of volunteer time is spent in social services. In some European countries, such as the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands, where government provides funding for most social welfare, the majority of volunteering is in recreation and expressive volunteering related to civic issues and social movements. The situation is different in transitional democracies. Under communism, the majority of associations that were permitted were in the areas of sports and recreation. These associations still remain the dominant type of nonprofit organization, although many new social welfare organizations have been formed under newly formed democratic governments.

#### Chart 2

For example, the display on this chart reveals the variation among reporting volunteering in social welfare activities which includes social services, health, the environment, and youth. Of

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<sup>1</sup>Commission on Private Philanthropy and Public Needs, op.cit.

<sup>2</sup>Susan J. Ellis and Katherine H. Noyes. *By the People*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997, p. xiii.

the 66 percent of adult Americans who reported volunteering on the World Values Survey in 2000, 34 percent of the population reported volunteering in social activities. The average for Western Europe was 10 percent of adults volunteering in these activities; for Eastern Europe it was five percent.

Another way of looking at the volunteers in social welfare is to look at the relationship of the size of the nonprofit sector in each nation and the share of service provision within the nonprofit sector. (See Charts 3a and 3b attached). In the Johns Hopkins Comparative International study, the researchers found that the largest nonprofit sectors were in the Netherlands, Ireland, Israel, and Belgium. In these countries, from 9 to 13 percent of paid employees worked in service provision, but the government delivers most of these services through nonprofit organizations. In the case of Austria, Germany, France and Spain where government funds most social welfare, the delivery of social welfare is to a large part through government agencies. These countries had welfare systems almost fully supported by government. The next largest grouping was the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom who employed from 6 to 8 percent of employees as a share of total nonprofit employment. However, when we compare paid employees with volunteers in social welfare, the picture changes. The United Kingdom and the United States, mixed welfare economies, have the largest share of volunteer in social welfare, whereas the Netherlands and Belgium with government funded programs have a much lower proportion of volunteers working in the welfare fields as do France, Spain and Germany and the other eastern European countries. In countries with mixed welfare economies, the level of volunteering in organizations that provide social welfare is higher, whether that service is primarily provided by government or by nonprofit organizations.<sup>3</sup>

### **III. How Is Volunteering Increased and the Traditions of Service Passed on to the next Generation?**

Volunteering for the most part is encouraged and learned. Volunteering must be encouraged by government, the schools, and the business, and by religious institutions and families. That is, there is a shared national consensus that all sectors share responsibility in improving and maintaining the quality of life in communities. Governments can no longer provide all services; citizens have an obligation to share in the life of the community, since they share the life there; and businesses have a social responsibility to participate in improving and maintaining the quality of community life. Research conducted in the United States and other countries has shown that volunteering can be encouraged through public policy, by encouraging youth service through schools and other organizations, by asking people to volunteer, and by providing adequate infrastructure to recruit, train, and match volunteers with organizations.

Over the last two decades, we have been studying how to increase volunteering in the United States, and recently the combined efforts of voluntary organizations, government, and the business have begun to make a difference. Recent national surveys have shown that both the number and diversity of people volunteering is on the rise. The Independent Sector national

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<sup>3</sup>Lester M. Salamon, Helmut K. Anheier et.al. *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, 1999.II

survey reports that volunteering increased from 49 percent of adults in 1996 to 56 percent in 1999, the most substantial increase since 1989.<sup>4</sup> An analysis of the factors that have contributed to the rise in adult volunteering suggest that participation in youth organizations, and other membership-based activities during youth are closely associated with continued participation during the teen years and higher levels of voting and participation as adults.<sup>5</sup> While this research verifies that Americans across all income-levels volunteer, it also indicates that individuals with a college degree and higher income are more likely to volunteer. Importantly, the most powerful determinant of volunteering for both adults and youth is being asked.<sup>6</sup> Among young people who were asked to volunteer, 93 percent became involved, whereas only 24 percent of those *not* asked actually volunteered.

In light of declining volunteer rates among young people during the 1980's, policymakers and education advocates initiated several programs to stimulate and encourage youth volunteerism and civic engagement. Organizations like City Year and Teach for America advanced the cause of youth service, focusing attention on youth at greatest risk. Umbrella organizations like Youth Service America worked with major youth development organizations like the Boys and Girls Scouts and Boys and Girls Inc., Campus Compact and the Campus Outreach Opportunity League to increase community service among young people and encourage schools to include community service as part of the education experience. Combined, their efforts ultimately led to a national service program.<sup>6</sup>

In 1993, the National Community Service Trust Act established AmeriCorps, which merged Volunteers in Service to America (Vista) and the National Community Service Corps. In that same year, Congress enacted legislation that enjoyed broad bipartisan support to establish the Corporation of National Service (CNS). CNS serves as the umbrella organization that manages AmeriCorps, Vista and other programs related to youth community service. Other volunteer programs also managed through CNS include, the National Senior Service Corps, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program and the Foster Grandparents Program.

Following on the success of City Year and confirming the results of the Independent Sector surveys about teen voluntarism, the AmeriCorps program embodies the ideal that those who provide community service are empowered themselves. Similar to Peace Corps volunteers, AmeriCorps volunteers receive a stipend for one or two years of service and a scholarship for education beyond their service. In 1998-1999, the Corporation of National Service reported that 33,854 young people were in service through 593 grants awarded to state and national grantees, and that well over 100,000 young people have served in AmeriCorps since its inception.

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<sup>4</sup>Saxon-Harrold op.cit.

<sup>5</sup>See Virginia Hodgkinson and Murray Weitzman, *Giving and Volunteering in the United States*, 1996 edition. Washington, D.C.: Independent Sector, 1997 and Eleanor Brown "The Scope of volunteer Activity and Public Service", *Law and Contemporary Problems* 62, 4 (Autumn 1999): 17-42.

<sup>6</sup>Jon Van Til, *Growing Civil Society*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000.

To date independent evaluations suggest that AmeriCorps has been successful. Evaluations have shown that communities were able to leverage additional time and money from enlisting the service of AmeriCorps volunteers: eight volunteers and a return of \$1.66 per dollar of investment were generated in communities for each AmeriCorps volunteer. The breadth of services provided by AmeriCorps volunteers also confirms the program's success. In 1997-1998, volunteers taught nearly a half million students in grades K-12 grades, recruited or trained 41,000 peer tutors; administered pre-natal screening and health services to one half million and distributed health information to nearly 1.6 million. Volunteers also provided shelter for the homeless, planted trees, repaired community buildings, and trained students in conflict mediation activities and violence avoidance activities after school.

Regarding its goal to mutually benefit volunteers as well as the communities served, the Corps demographic profile suggests that the program has been successful in attracting volunteers from minority and low-income communities in need of further education. Although the majority (51 percent) were white, 27 percent were black/African American, nearly 15 percent were Hispanic, and eight percent were Asian Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native or other. Sixty-five percent of the AmeriCorp volunteers has less than high school, high school degrees or some college, the remaining 35 percent had two-year college degrees or higher. Additionally, an overwhelming 78 percent of students had income below \$20,000. To date AmeriCorps has provided 102,000 volunteers with educational awards. Although the number of AmeriCorps volunteers is small compared to the estimated number of unpaid volunteers nationwide, the AmeriCorps program has significantly increased the visibility of the importance of community service among young people nationwide.

The increase in both youth and adult volunteering can be explained by the strong public policy emphasis on volunteering as a way to solve community problems for the past two decades. In fact, each president since Ronald Reagan has focused on the importance of volunteering. George H.W. Bush supported the founding of the Points of Light Foundation in May of 1990. Working through a network of five-hundred volunteer centers, every day the PLF recognizes one volunteer as a point of light for his or her community. President Clinton followed with AmeriCorps in 1993 and legislation for the Corporation for National Service. In 1997, the Points of Light Foundation and the Corporation for National Service launched the President's Summit on Volunteering. Bearing witness to the history of a national commitment to volunteering, all living presidents, with the exception of Mrs. Reagan representing President Reagan, attended the Summit. During the Summit, participants from corporations, membership and citizen groups and leadership from 143 cities in all fifty states initiated America's Promise, a nonprofit organization to be led by General Colin Powell and committed to mentor, protect, nurture, teach and serve at-risk youth.

As a result of these efforts, several on-going studies confirm that younger people *are* volunteering in greater numbers. In its thirty-second year surveying incoming college freshman, the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) at the University of California in Los Angeles reported that 75 percent of freshman entering college in 1999 reported volunteering while in high school. Previous freshman surveys also reveal a steady increase since 1989 when 62 percent reported volunteering.<sup>7</sup> In 1996, the Independent Sector teen volunteering survey

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<sup>7</sup>Astin, Alexander W. et. al. *The American Freshman: Thirty Year Trends*. Los Angeles, CA:

found that 59 percent of young people between 12 and 17 years of age volunteered an average of 3.5 hours a week. This study also reported that 13.3 million young people volunteered 2.4 billion hours providing the full-time equivalent of nearly 1.1 million employees at an estimated value of \$7.7 billion.<sup>8</sup>

In 1999, the National Center on Educational Statistics (NCES) sponsored a survey to estimate how many public schools at all levels were incorporating service-learning into their curricula as well as gauging general levels of community service. The findings were encouraging: Over 64 percent of all public schools reported students participating in community service, although the percentages were higher in high schools (83 percent) than in middle schools (77 percent) or elementary schools (55 percent). While data on community service in schools has not been collected regularly, this survey did point to a significant increase in schools involving students in community service activities. In 1984, 27 percent of high schools reported community service curriculum offerings compared with 83 percent in 1999.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which set the national average on the civics education scale at 150 out of 300, reported new findings regarding the connection between volunteering and civic knowledge. Overall students tested in grades 4, 8, and 12 did not show great proficiency in civic knowledge. However, students in grade 12, who reported that they volunteered, scored higher than those who did not volunteer. Roughly half of those surveyed in grade 12 had volunteered.

While more students are volunteering, there seems to be a growing disconnect between volunteering and community service and government. Volunteering related to good citizenship must be taught, and while a majority of schools now encourage or require community, only a small percentage of schools relate the meaning of community service to citizenship. Recently a study of young people in twenty-eight countries reveals the importance of starting to volunteer while young. The study found that most young people had a thin understanding of citizenship, but those who participated in student government or in volunteering had a greater knowledge of both citizenship responsibilities and their relationship to government. This chart demonstrates that some countries emphasize student volunteering and involvement more than others. The report concluded that for twenty-eight countries participation in youth organizations was important both to stimulate volunteering as well as civic education.<sup>9</sup>

#### Charts 4a and 4b

There are other ways to increase volunteer participation. National surveys on giving

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Hirgher Education Research Institute, 1997.

<sup>8</sup>Virginia Hodgkinson and Murray Weitzman. *Volunteering and Giving in the United States Among Teenagers 12 to 17 Years of Age*. Washington, D.C.: Independent Sector, 1997.

<sup>9</sup>Judith Torney-Porta. *Citizenship and Education in Twenty-Eight Countries: Civic Knowledge and Engagement at Age Fourteen*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 2001.

and volunteering have been tracking the motivations underlying Americans' philanthropic behavior since 1987. These surveys consistently indicate that being asked to give or to volunteer is by far the greatest determinant of volunteering behavior both among adults and young people. Other important factors include: membership in a church or other organization, childhood experiences, and current perceptions of one's economic situation. Additionally, as with adults, children from families with higher education, higher income, and religious involvement are far more likely to give or volunteer. While education and income are particularly strong determinants of volunteer participation, the Independent Sector survey findings suggest that some of these characteristics can be offset by asking.<sup>10</sup> These survey results have consistently shown that volunteers who are asked to volunteer are four times more likely to volunteer than those who are not asked. The results are fairly consistent regardless of race or ethnicity.

After being asked, membership in an organization was the second most important factor in determining adult volunteering. More than 80 percent of respondents in the 1999 survey were members of a religious or secular organization. Of these, 63 percent reported volunteering, well above the national average of 56 percent of adults who reported volunteering. Among people who reported not belonging to any organization, 24 percent reported volunteering.

Membership in either a secular organization or a religious organization is also very strongly associated with volunteering. Among members of any organization, 67 percent of members reported being asked to volunteer compared with 32 percent among non-members. Among members who were asked, 94 percent actually volunteered. Among non-members who were not asked, 16 percent volunteered.

Youth participation is another important factor influencing adult giving and volunteering. The Independent Sector survey results consistently find that adults who reported that they belonged to a youth group volunteered, were active in religious organizations, or participated in student government when they were young showed a much higher level of participation in giving and volunteering as adults than those who did not have these experiences. For example in the 1999 survey among the 52 percent of respondents who reported that they did some volunteer work when they were young, 80 percent reported household contributions and 71 percent reported volunteering in that year. Among the 48 percent who reported that they did not volunteer when young, 59 percent reported household contributions and 37 percent reported volunteering.

In addition to socioeconomic and demographic factors, certain personal motivations are also associated with giving and volunteering. Respondents give or volunteer at much higher rates if they feel they have the power to improve the welfare of others, feel compassion to help people in need, and believe that by giving or volunteering, they can improve the moral basis of society. In a recent analysis of these attitudes, it was found that individuals are more trusting of others if they volunteer, have a higher education, are married, and are working.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Hodgkinson and Weitzman, op.cit.

<sup>11</sup>Brown, op. cit.

In sum, research over the past decade has indicated that membership in religious and secular organizations, regular attendance at church, socializing with friends, volunteering during youth, and most importantly, simply being asked to participate are the most important factors contribute to increased adult volunteering. But studies also show that volunteering and its relationship to good citizenship must be taught. Young people who volunteer report that they gain values of tolerance, compassion, and personal empowerment, but they do not relate volunteering to the improvement of one's community or country, to impact society, or to change government policy unless they are taught such relationships in an academic program.

#### **IV. How Do We Measure Volunteer Contributions?**

Most governments measure the contribution of market and government to the gross domestic product, but no governments tabulate the contributions of volunteers or for the most part separately tabulate the contributions of the nonprofit sector to the economy or to the social health of nations. We hope this situation will begin to change with the development of satellite accounts to the United Nations account under the leadership of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project. In an effort to come up with a way of measuring the contributions of the nonprofit sector and volunteers to the economy, my colleague and I developed a methodology of revising the national income accounts and the employment data that is now being utilized in the Johns Hopkins project and in other country studies. Currently, however, it is primarily an effort of researchers in the private sector and has not been adopted by governments. But by using these new calculations, we have found the profound contributions of volunteers to societies.

#### Charts 5a and b

When volunteer time is counted along with paid employment in the nonprofit sector, the story changes significantly. In Western Europe and Australia, volunteer time increases total nonprofit employment from seven to ten percent. If we look at Australia more closely, we find that employment is significantly higher in education, social care, health, and culture and recreation when volunteer time is added. For example, the share of nonprofit employment in social services increases from 20 to 24 percent when volunteer time is accounted for and from 16 to 23 percent in culture and recreation.

#### Chart 6

Volunteer contributions are even more dramatic when we look at the share of total nonprofit employment that volunteer time represents by country. In western Europe, it ranges from 52 percent of total nonprofit employment in Finland to 19 percent in Ireland. In eastern Europe it ranges from 54 percent in Romania where paid employment in the sector is just over one percent to 19 percent in Hungary. In Australia, volunteer time represents 32 percent of nonprofit employment and in the United States, it is 39 percent. What these statistics reveal is that volunteer time is a significant percentage of nonprofit employment in many countries.

#### Chart 7a and b

Depending on the type of organization, volunteer time can significantly change the revenue picture of an organization. Take, for example, the Plunket Society. There are approximately 1,000 full-time paid employees. But the time of 10,000 volunteers adds the equivalent of another 1,529 full-time employee equivalents or an increase in the total employees of 153 percent. The total revenue of Plunket is \$35.2 million of which \$17 million goes to employees' salaries. The value of the time of Plunket's volunteers is \$46.8 million when the total hours of volunteer time are multiplied by the average hourly wage. This increases Plunket's total revenue to \$82 million or by 133 percent.

Not counting volunteer time greatly diminishes the story about Plunket but about its volunteers. Not estimating the number and hours volunteers provide by type of charity greatly diminishes the story of a country where citizens are very active. If nations want to increase volunteering and citizen service, they should account for these contributions as part of their national accounts.

The contributions of nonprofit organizations and the time of volunteers should be considered as important contributions to the chart of accounts and the social well being of nations.

## V. Conclusion: The Benefits of Volunteering

Suffice it to say, people would not give their time without pay and work long hours over several years unless they derive some special benefits. These benefits were not directly sought, but the return must be great enough for people to stay committed and involved. Research shows that long term volunteers do not report benefits or recognition or better jobs, but rather internal benefits relating to their development as full human beings. American teens report that the major benefits they derived from volunteering were: respectfulness of others; helpfulness and kindness; getting along with and relating with others; satisfaction from helping others; and understanding people who were different than they were.<sup>1</sup> There also is increasing evidence that students who engage in service learning at school continue volunteering as adults.<sup>2</sup>

There are a variety of effects from volunteering upon adults. Most volunteers gain satisfaction from their work. They have increased self esteem and believe it is in their power to help others. They remain volunteers because they gain satisfaction from their work. Volunteering, has a direct impact on physical health as well as mental health, especially among the elderly, who seem to have more purpose in life and live longer. In addition, volunteering leads to increased civic mindedness and higher levels of trust<sup>3</sup>.

But some of the best evidence comes from the words of volunteers themselves: Carmine Antonelle (age 49) is a sanitation worker in New York and raises money for disabled children: "I tell anyone thinking about volunteering, you'll get emotionally involved. And when you get emotionally involved, nothing can keep you down." Valdimir Joseph (24 years) is a college counselor and founder of Inner Strength, an organization that provides mentoring for young African-American men: "Everyone has something to offer. Working with other volunteers has helped give me strength. I feel empowered watching volunteers develop relationships with these kids, watching them both grow." Julie Cotton (35 years) is a lab researcher and trains search and rescue dogs: "Everyone has talents. You have to find out what yours are and then volunteer with that. And you have to feel personal satisfaction from helping others." Ben Smilowitz (16 years) is a high school student and co-founder of the International Student Activism Alliance which encourages student activism, including voting: "Volunteering, to me, isn't only washing windows or working at nursing homes—not that these things aren't important. It's also making things better by speaking up for what you believe in and getting people organized." Finally, Tommy Chesbro (37 years) is a community health organizer and an HIV prevention speaker, educator, and organizer: "It sounds cliché, but while one match will barely light a room, a hundred will light up the whole room. Every little bit contributes to the whole. There's more work to be done than any

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<sup>1</sup>See Hodgkinson and Weitzman, *Volunteering and Giving Among Teenagers...op.cit.*

<sup>2</sup>Brown, *op.cit.*

<sup>3</sup>John Wilson and Marc Musick, "The Effects of Volunteering on the Volunteer," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 62, 4 (Autumn 1999): 141-168.

one person can do, so anything a person can do for his or her community will make it stronger.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, Brian O'Connell, founding president of Independent Sector, the first national coalition of voluntary organizations, foundations, and corporate social responsibility programs in the United States to build a voice for the third sector, used to provide a quotation from an epitaph that for him expressed the meaning of volunteering and community service:

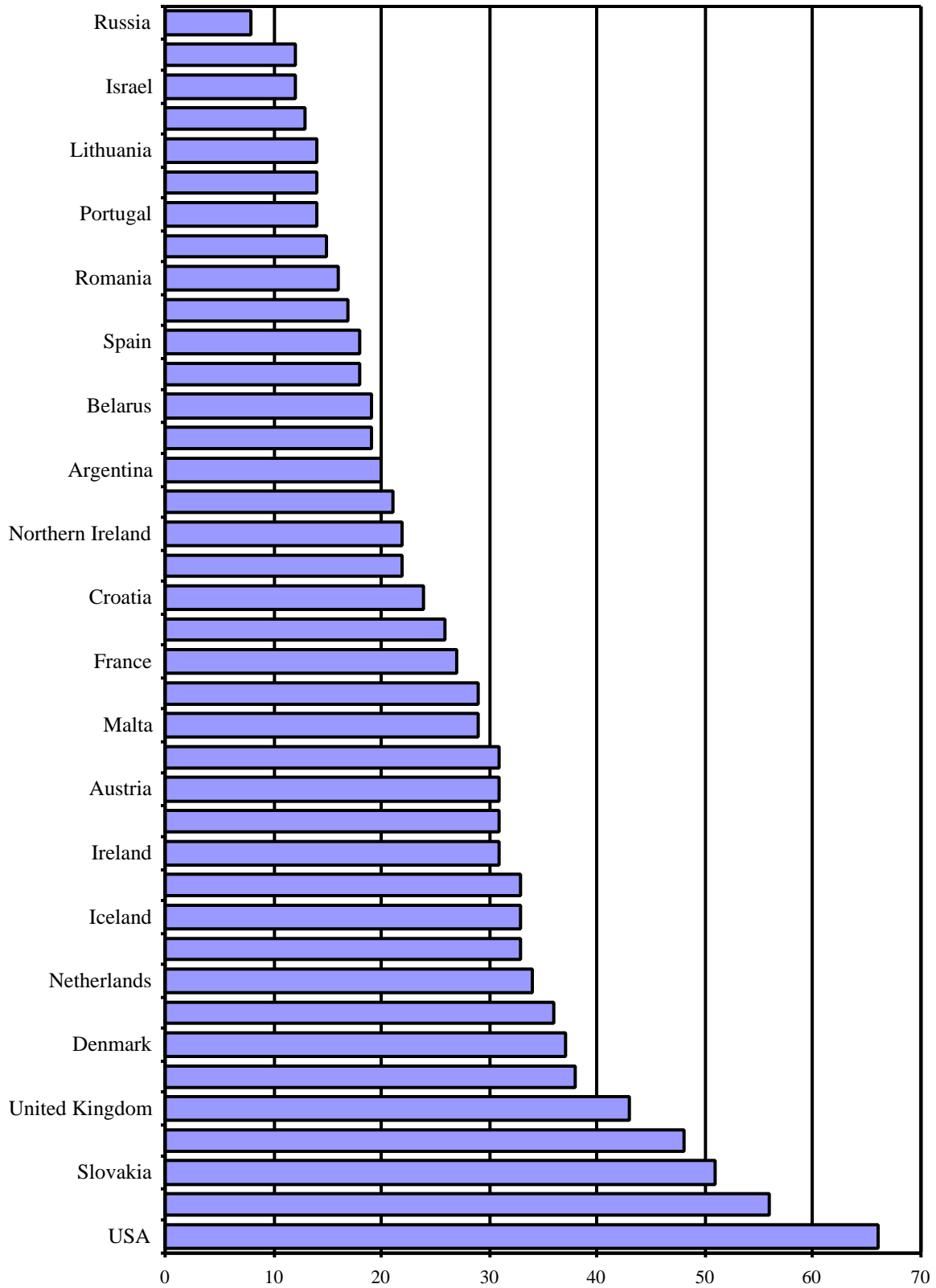
*What I spent is gone  
What I kept is lost  
But what I gave to charity  
Will be mine forever.*

Many nations should be grateful to this invisible workforce that helps others and improves the quality of life of our communities.

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<sup>4</sup>These quotations are taken from Brian O'Connell, *Voices From the Heart*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books and Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999, pp. 18, 30, 64, and 117.

*Chart 1*  
*Volunteers as percentage of the adult population*

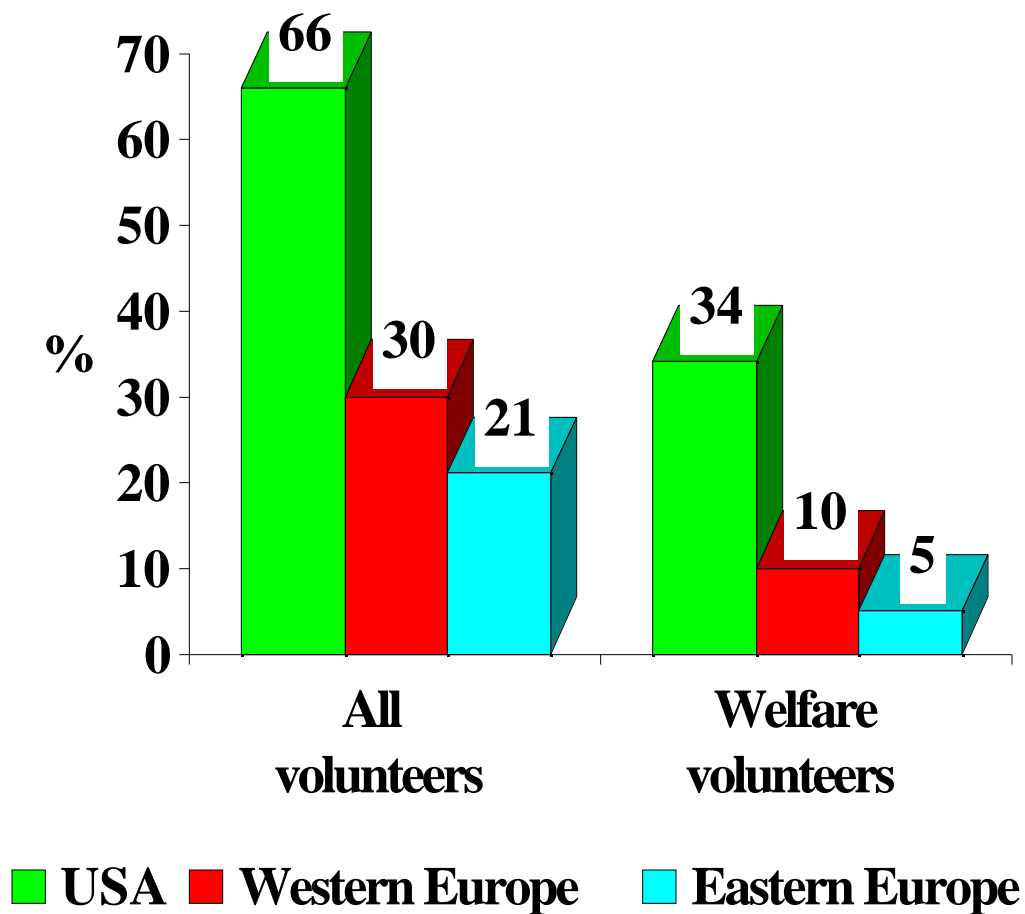


Sources: CCS at LSE & CSVOS at GU European and US Comparative Project  
 Anheier, Helmut K. and Salamon, Lester M. (1999), *Volunteering in cross-national*

*perspective: Initial comparisons, Law and Contemporary Problems, Vol. 62, 4, p. 58.*

## Chart 2

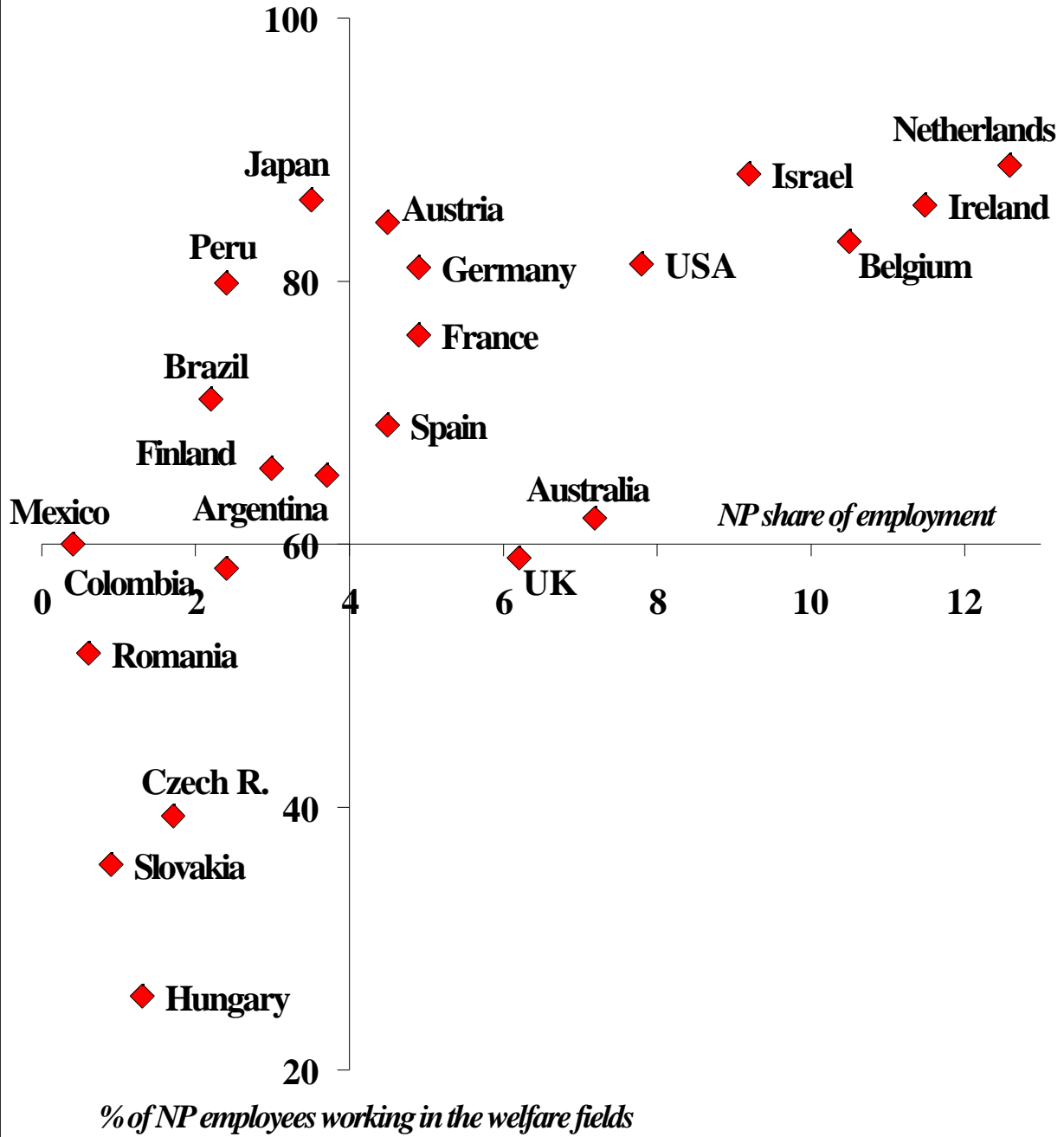
*All volunteers and volunteers working in the welfare fields (social care, health, and youth work) as percentage of the adult population*



Source: CCS at LSE & CSVOS at GU – European and US Comparative Project

**Chart 3a**

***Relationships between the size of the nonprofit sector and the share of service provision within the sector***



Source: Salamon, Lester M. et al. (1999) *Global civil society*, The Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, Baltimore. – Calculations made by the author.



**Chart 3b**

***Relationships between the size of the nonprofit sector and the share of volunteers working in***



Sources: CCS at LSE & CSVOS at GU - European and US Comparative Project and Salamon, Lester M. et al. (1999) *Global civil society*, The Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, Baltimore. – Calculations made by the author.



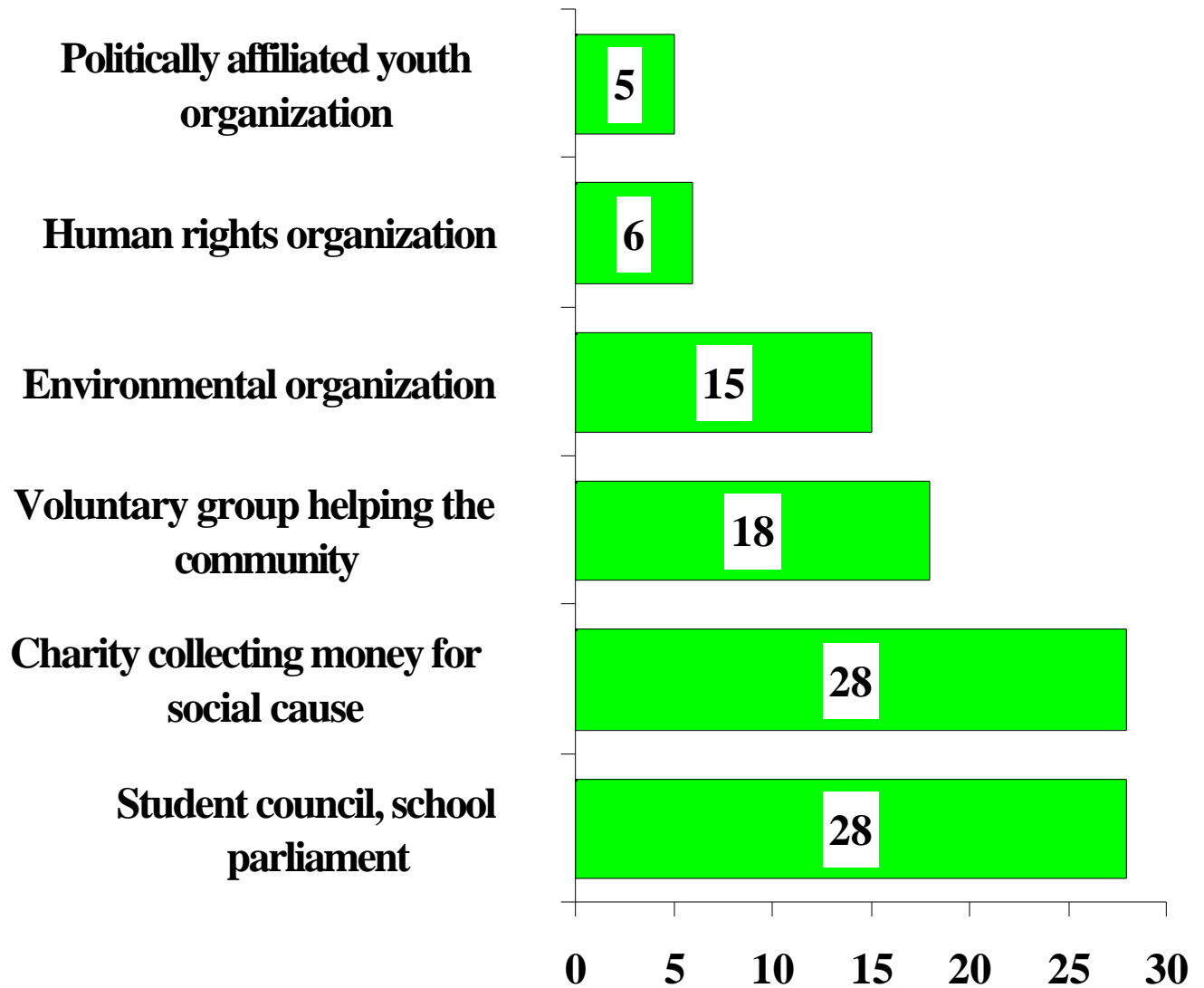
Chart 4a

Percentage of students who report having participated in voluntary organizations

	<b>Average share</b>	<b>Highest share</b>	<b>Lowest share</b>
<b>Student council, school parliament</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>59%</b> <b>Greece</b>	<b>3%</b> <b>Slovakia</b>
<b>Politically affiliated youth organization</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>25%</b> <b>Cyprus</b>	<b>1%</b> <b>Czech R.</b> <b>Lithuania</b> <b>Poland</b> <i>Slovakia</i> <b>Slovenia</b>
<b>Environmental organization</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>40%</b> <b>Colombia</b>	<b>5%</b> <b>Slovakia</b>
<b>Human rights organization</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>22%</b> <b>Cyprus</b>	<b>1%</b> <b>Slovakia</b>
<b>Voluntary group helping the community</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>50%</b> <b>USA</b>	<b>5%</b> <b>Poland</b>
<b>Charity collecting money for social cause</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>84%</b> <b>Norway</b>	<b>5%</b> <b>Slovakia</b>

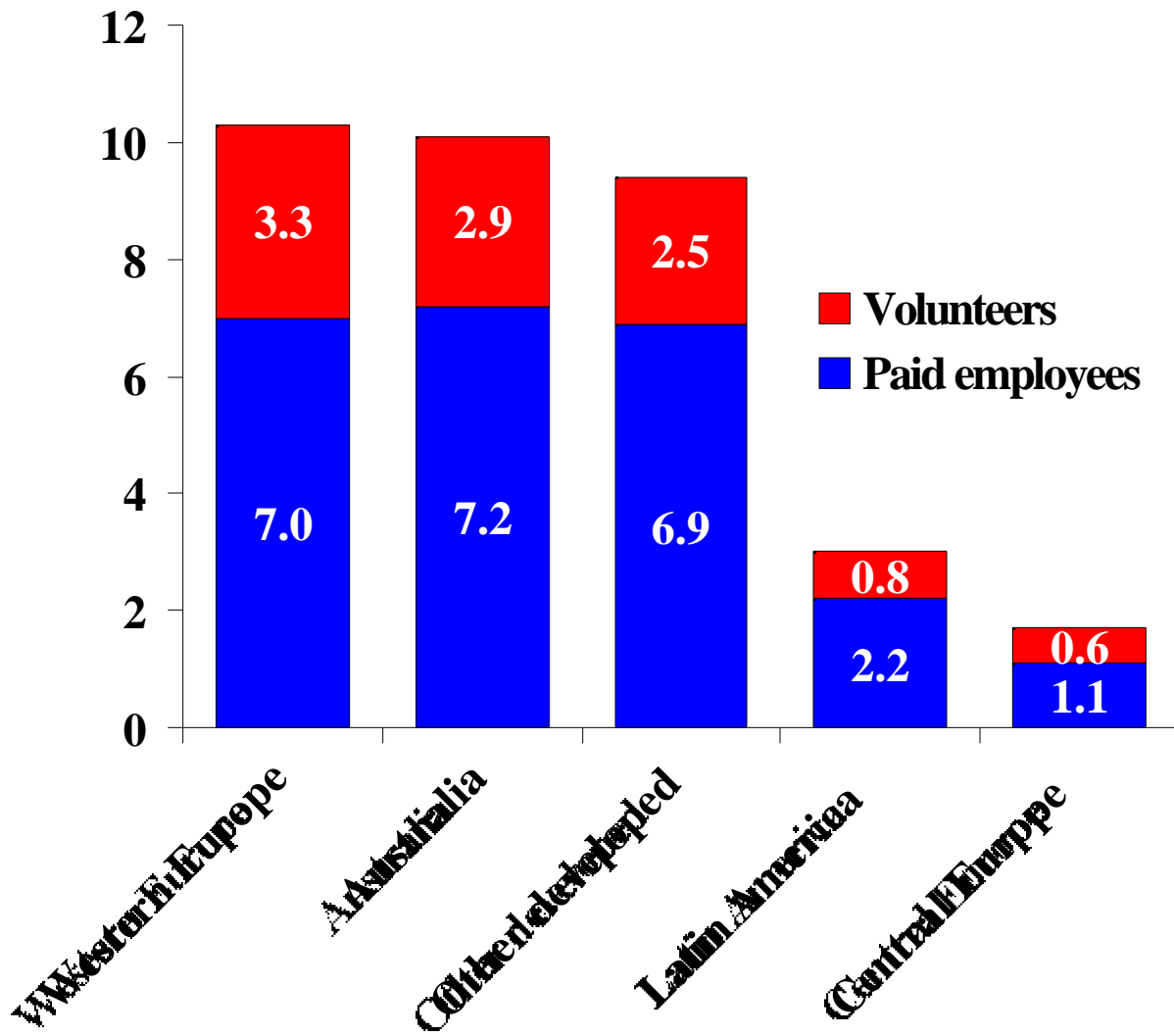
*Source: Torney-Purta, Judith et al. (2001) Citizenship and education in twenty-eight countries: Civic knowledge and engagement at age fourteen, The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, Amsterdam.*

Chart 4b  
Percentage of students who report having participated in voluntary organizations



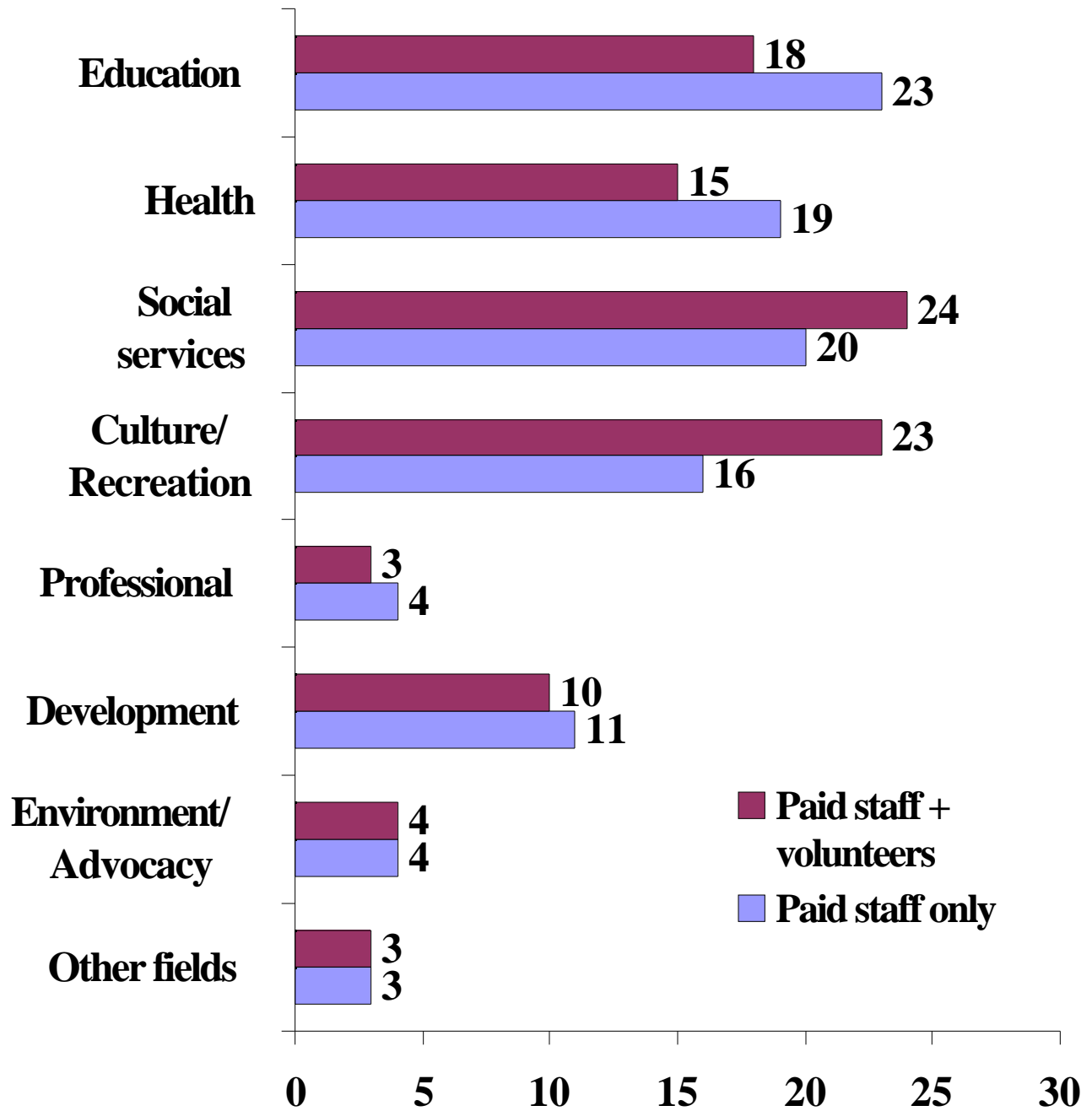
Source: Torney-Purta, Judith et al. (2001) *Citizenship and education in twenty-eight countries: Civic knowledge and engagement at age fourteen*, The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, Amsterdam.

Chart 5a  
 Nonprofit share of employment with and without volunteers, 1995



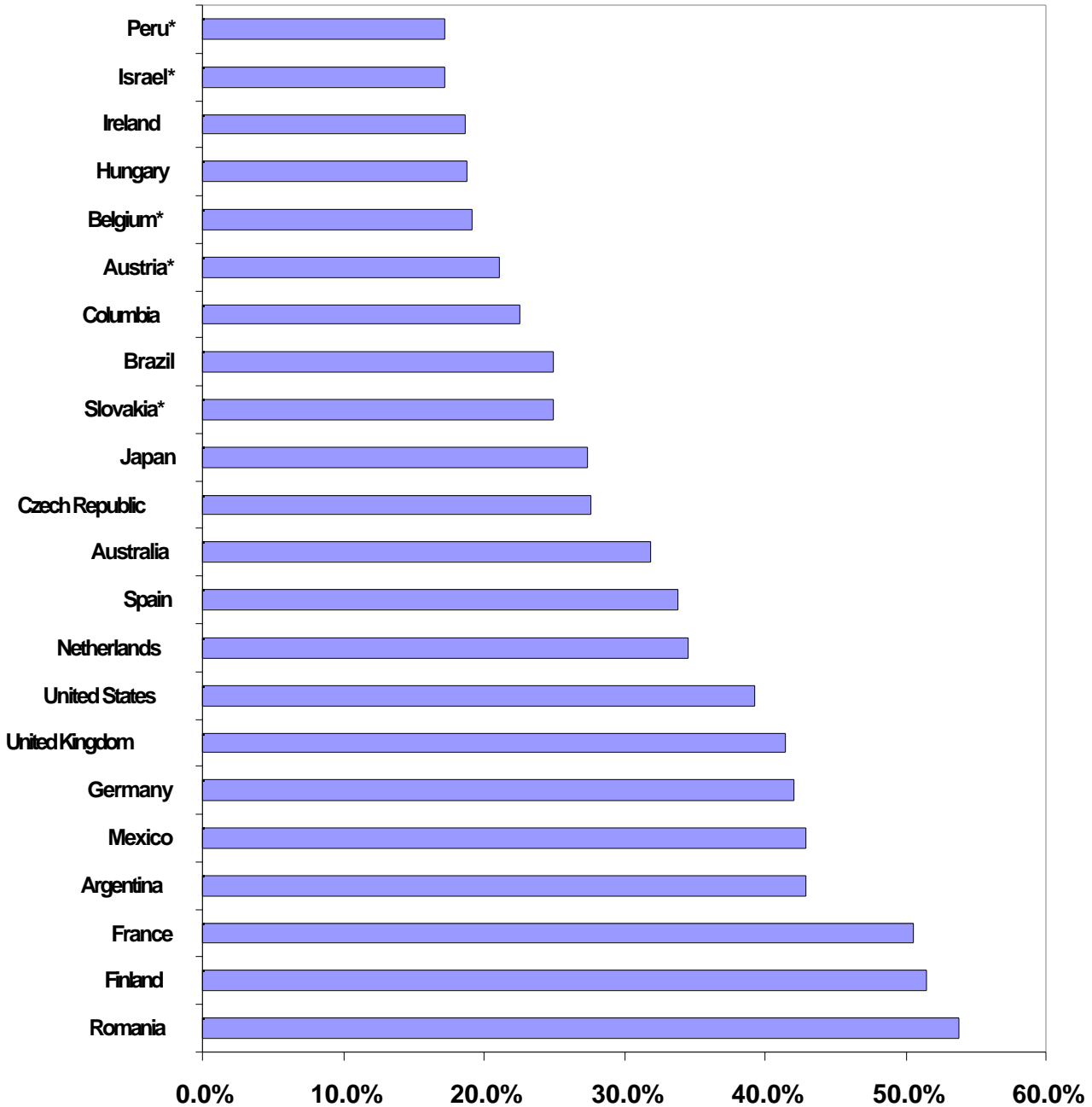
Source: Salamon, Lester M. et al. (1999) *Global civil society*, The Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, Baltimore

*Chart 5b*  
*Composition of nonprofit employment in Australia,*  
*with and without volunteers, by field, 1995*



*Source: Salamon, Lester M. et al. (1999) Global civil society, The Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, Baltimore.*

**Chart 6**  
**Percent of Nonprofit Employment Provided by**  
**Volunteer FTE by Country - 1995**



Source: Salamon, Lester M., et al. Global Civil Society Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector.  
 Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1995. Author's Calculations

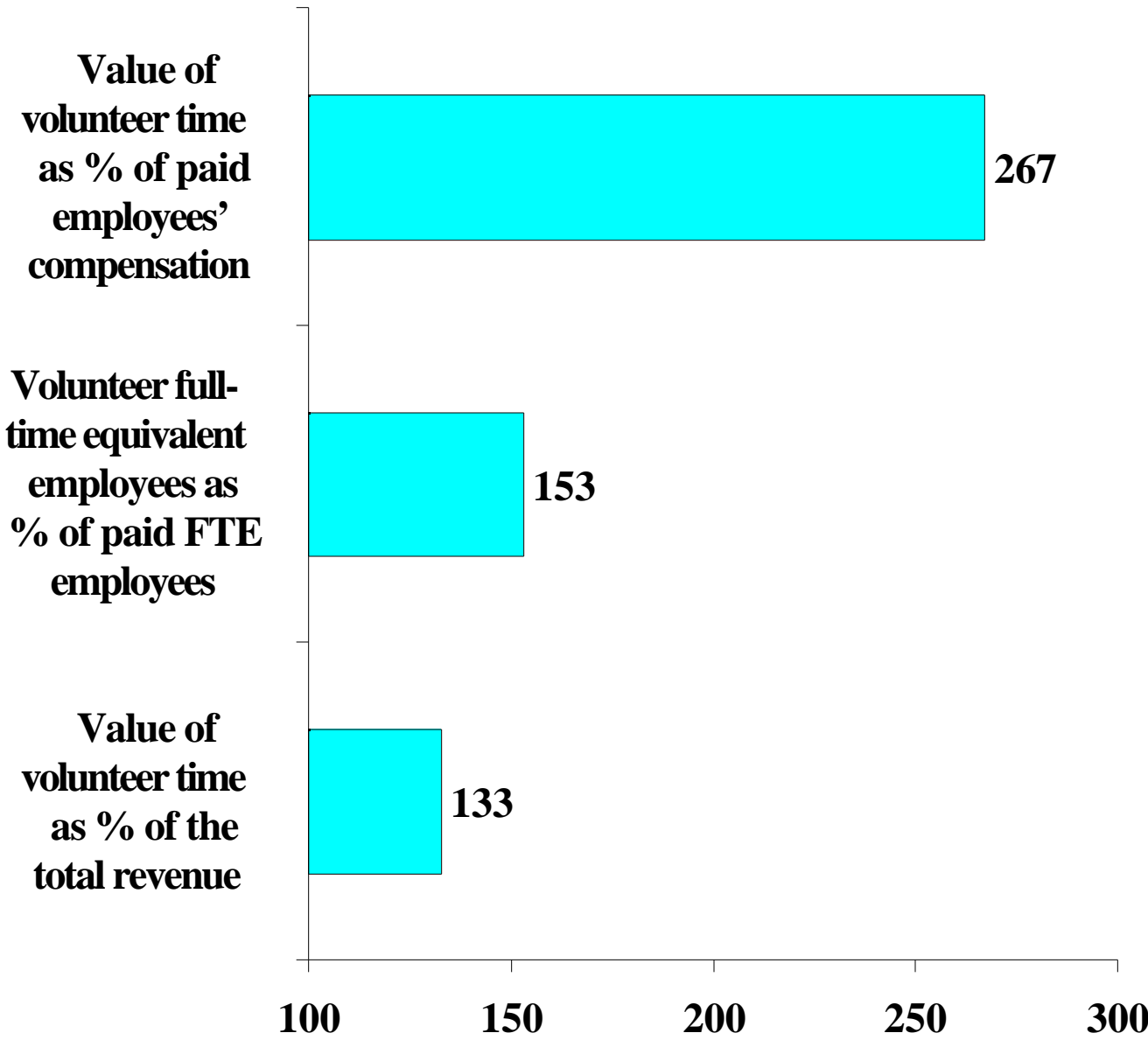


**Chart 7a**  
***Plunket's revenue with and without volunteers***

<b>Total revenues</b>	<b>\$ 35.2 million</b>
<b>Total number of full-time employees</b>	<b>600</b>
<b>Full-time equivalent number of paid employees</b>	<b>1,000</b>
<b>Total paid employees' compensation</b>	<b>\$ 17.5 million</b>
<b>Number of volunteers at 5 hours per week</b>	<b>10,000</b>
<b>Volunteer full-time equivalent employees</b>	<b>1,529</b>
<b>Total assigned dollar value of the volunteer time</b>	<b>\$ 46.8 million</b>
<b>Total revenue including volunteer time</b>	<b>\$ 82.0 million</b>

*Source: Author's calculations, data provided by The Plunket Society*

**Chart 7b**  
***The contribution of Plunket's volunteers***



Source: Author's calculations, data provided by The Plunket Society.

## Appendix Table 1

### *Volunteers as percentage of the adult population*

Category	Country	% of volunteers	
61% or more	USA <sup>a</sup>	66	
Between 41 and 60%	Sweden <sup>a</sup>	56	
	Slovakia <sup>a</sup>	51	
	Colombia <sup>b</sup>	48	
	United Kingdom <sup>a</sup>	43	
Between 31 and 40%	Finland <sup>a</sup>	38	
	Denmark <sup>a</sup>	37	
	Belgium <sup>a</sup>	36	
	Netherlands <sup>a</sup>	34	
	Greece <sup>a</sup>	33	
	Iceland <sup>a</sup>	33	
	Czech Republic <sup>a</sup>	33	
	Ireland <sup>a</sup>	31	
	Luxemburg <sup>a</sup>	31	
	Austria <sup>a</sup>	31	
	Peru <sup>b</sup>	31	
	Between 21 and 30%	Malta <sup>a</sup>	29
		Slovenia <sup>a</sup>	29
France <sup>a</sup>		27	
Italy <sup>a</sup>		26	
Croatia <sup>a</sup>		24	
Latvia <sup>a</sup>		22	
Northern Ireland <sup>a</sup>		22	
Germany <sup>a</sup>		21	
Between 11 and 20%	Argentina <sup>b</sup>	20	
	Australia <sup>b</sup>	19	
	Belarus <sup>a</sup>	19	
	Estonia <sup>a</sup>	18	
	Spain <sup>a</sup>	18	
	Bulgaria <sup>a</sup>	17	
	Romania <sup>a</sup>	16	
	Hungary <sup>a</sup>	15	
	Portugal <sup>a</sup>	14	
	Poland <sup>a</sup>	14	
	Lithuania <sup>a</sup>	14	
	Ukraine <sup>a</sup>	13	
	Israel <sup>b</sup>	12	
	Brazil <sup>b</sup>	12	
10% or less	Russia <sup>a</sup>	8	

Sources: <sup>a</sup>CCS at LSE & CSVOS at GU – European and US Comparative Project

<sup>b</sup>Anheier, Helmut K. and Salamon, Lester M. (1999), *Volunteering in cross-national perspective: Initial comparisons, Law and Contemporary Problems*, Vol. 62, 4, p. 58.

## Appendix Table 2

### *Volunteers as percentage of the adult population*

	All volunteers	Volunteers working in the field of			
		social care	health	environment	youth
as percentage of the adult population					
<i>USA</i>	66	15	11	8	20
<i>Western Europe</i>					
Sweden	56	9	3	4	5
United Kingdom	43	14	10	8	15
Finland	38	7	4	2	4
Denmark	37	4	1	2	5
Belgium	36	6	4	3	4
Netherlands	34	9	7	n.a.	n.a.
Greece	33	8	5	5	3
Iceland	33	9	2	1	3
Ireland	31	4	3	1	5
Luxembourg	31	7	3	4	6
Austria	31	2	3	2	2
Malta	29	5	2	2	3
France	27	4	2	1	2
Italy	26	5	3	2	3
Northern Ireland	22	3	3	1	3
Germany	21	2	1	1	2
Spain	18	3	1	1	2
Portugal	14	1	1	0	1
<i>Eastern Europe</i>					
Slovakia	51	6	4	2	6
Czech Republic	33	3	3	3	6
Slovenia	29	5	2	3	4
Croatia	24	1	2	2	2
Latvia	22	2	1	1	1
Belarus	19	3	2	2	1
Estonia	18	3	1	1	2
Bulgaria	17	1	1	1	1
Romania	16	1	1	1	1
Hungary	15	3	1	2	1
Poland	14	2	1	1	1
Lithuania	14	1	1	0	1
Ukraine	13	1	1	0	1
Russia	8	1	0	0	0

Source: CCS at LSE & CSVOS at GU – European and US Comparative Project

## Appendix Table 3

*All volunteers and volunteers working in the welfare fields (social care, health, and youth work)  
as percentage of the adult population*

	All volunteers	Welfare volunteers
	as percentage of the adult population	
<i>USA</i>	66	34
<i>Western Europe</i>		
Sweden	56	15
United Kingdom	43	33
Finland	38	14
Denmark	37	9
Belgium	36	12
Netherlands	34	12
Greece	33	11
Iceland	33	13
Ireland	31	9
Luxembourg	31	14
Austria	31	6
Malta	29	7
France	27	7
Italy	26	9
Northern Ireland	22	8
Germany	21	5
Spain	18	5
Portugal	14	3
<i>Eastern Europe</i>		
Slovakia	51	14
Czech Republic	33	11
Slovenia	29	9
Croatia	24	5
Latvia	22	3
Belarus	19	4
Estonia	18	4
Bulgaria	17	3
Romania	16	2
Hungary	15	4
Poland	14	3
Lithuania	14	2
Ukraine	13	2
Russia	8	1

*Source: CCS at LSE & CSVOS at GU – European and US Comparative Project*

## Appendix Table 4

<b>Volunteer Employment as a Percentage of Total Employment by Nation 1995 - 1997</b>					
	% of Adult Population Volunteering	Nonprofit Employment as % of Total Employment - Including Volunteers	% Nonprofit Employment - Paid	% Nonprofit Employment - Volunteer	Percent of Nonprofit Employment Provided by Volunteer FTE
<b>Western Europe</b>					
Finland	33.0%	6.4%	3.1%	3.3%	51.6%
France	23.0%	10.1%	5.0%	5.1%	50.5%
Germany	26.0%	8.8%	5.1%	3.7%	42.0%
United Kingdom	48.0%	10.6%	6.2%	4.4%	41.5%
Netherlands	46.0%	19.4%	12.7%	6.7%	34.5%
Spain	12.0%	6.8%	4.5%	2.3%	33.8%
Austria*	n/a	5.7%	4.5%	1.2%	21.1%
Belgium*	30.0%	13.0%	10.50%	2.5	19.2%
Ireland	20.0%	15.0%	12.2%	2.8%	18.7%
<b>Eastern and Central Europe</b>					
Romania	34.0%	1.3%	0.6%	0.7%	53.8%
Czech Republic	n/a	2.9%	1.8%	0.8%	27.6%
Slovakia*	n/a	1.2%	0.9%	0.3%	25.0%
Hungary	7.0%	1.6%	1.3%	0.3%	18.8%
<b>Latin America</b>					
Argentina	20.0%	7.7%	4.4%	3.3%	42.9%
Mexico	n/a	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%	42.9%
Brazil	12.0%	3.2%	2.4%	0.8%	25.0%
Columbia	48.0%	3.1%	2.4%	0.7%	22.6%
Peru*	31.0%	2.9%	2.4%	0.5%	17.2%
<b>Other Countries</b>					
United States	49.0%	14.5%	8.8%	5.7%	39.3%
Australia	19.0%	11.0%	7.5%	3.5%	31.8%
Japan	n/a	5.1%	3.7%	1.4%	27.5%
Israel*	12.0%	11.0%	9.2%	1.9%	17.3%
Singapore	9.3%	n/a	n/a	n/a	
South Korea (adults = 20 and over) - 1999	14.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	

**Source:** Salamon, Lester M., et al. Global Civil Society Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1995 and Anheier, Helmut K. and Lester M. Salamon "Volunteering in Cross-National Perspective: Initial Comparisons." Law

**Source:** Singapore - "Summary of Main Highlights of Survey Findings" [www.nvc.org.sp/others/summaryofhighlights.html](http://www.nvc.org.sp/others/summaryofhighlights.html)

**Source:** South Korea - "Major findings of the National Survey on South Korean Volunteer Awareness and Behavior in 1999" [www.iyv2001.org/iyv\\_eng/research/surveys/korea.htm](http://www.iyv2001.org/iyv_eng/research/surveys/korea.htm)

