
Shifts in Volunteerism and Civic Engagement

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*“We understand that human
virtue and ability are
expressed in reaching out to
better the lives of others.
The fittest human societies
are the ones that find a way
to do this consistently.”*

Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson

2005

Overview

- **Definitions**
 - **A Short History of the Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector in Canada**
 - **Canada's Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Today**
 - **Canada Compared to the Rest of the World**
 - **What has Changed?**
 - **How Will this Impact Canada?**
 - **What Can We Do About It?**
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Definitions

Volunteer

The term 'volunteer' refers to all who work by choice, without remuneration, on causes or for people outside their personal sphere. People volunteer formally, through organizations, or informally by participating and helping others.

An Accord Between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector, Voluntary Sector Initiative, December 2001.

Volunteering

Volunteering is the most fundamental act of citizenship and philanthropy in our society: It is offering time, energy and skills of one's own free will. It is an extension of being a good neighbour, transforming a collection of houses into a community, as people become involved in the improvement of their surroundings and choose to help others.

Making a Case for Volunteer Centres – Volunteer Ontario. 1996. As quoted in Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement, Weaver, Liz. Volunteer Canada. 2001

Volunteerism/Voluntarism

The sector distinguishes between volunteerism and voluntarism as:

Volunteerism is solely dedicated to the activity of volunteers.

Voluntarism includes those organizations that promote, support and build capacity around volunteerism.

Citizen/Civic Engagement

Welcoming the active involvement or engagement of individuals and communities in shaping society, whether through political or voluntary activities or both.

An Accord Between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector, Voluntary Sector Initiative, December 2001.

Social Capital/Social Economy

The strength of our relationships with our families and neighbours has a direct, measurable, positive benefit on our sense of well-being and on the economic health of our communities.

Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement, www.tamarackcommunity.ca

Our social order comprises of four sectors:

- Market Economy/Private Sector
 - Public/State Sector
 - Nonprofit/Voluntary/Civic (community)/Third Sector
 - Household Sector
-

Nonprofit and voluntary organizations are defined as:

- non-governmental
 - non-profit distributing
 - self governing
 - voluntary, and
 - formally incorporated or registered under specific legislation
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A Short History of the Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector in Canada

“History shows that the most successful societies are those that harness the energies of voluntary action, giving due recognition to the third sector of voluntary and community organizations.”

*NVCO Conference, Britain
Third Sector, Third Way, Keynote 1999*

-
- Early 1900s Canada was marked by a proliferation of private charities, often organized around religious or ethnic loyalties (i.e. helping children, unemployed, persons with disability, and the sick)
 - 1920s Canada, when the “head of the household” became unemployed, they would need to draw on savings, seek help from relatives, or gain “interest” bearing support from a bank, finance company or pawn shop
-

The public role did not take hold until the ravages of the Depression (1929-1939)

- there developed a collective promise of “never again”
- there was a surge of economic growth postwar due to technological and industrial advancement, and
- the mixed economy theory was introduced (i.e. state & private involvement)

The convergence of these forces expanded the role of the state in the economy and resulted in a substantial investment in social programs.

Late 1940s to 60s a national system of social security evolved:

- family allowances,
 - Unemployment Insurance,
 - Old Age Security,
 - Canada Assistance Plan,
 - Hospital Insurance,
 - Diagnostic Services Act, and subsequent
 - Medical Care Act
-

The mid-1960's to mid-1970's saw a major expansion of Canadian social programs

- medicare
 - Canada/Quebec Pension Plan
 - greatly increased access to post secondary education
 - more generous Unemployment Insurance program
-

Fiscal pressure on governments (provincial and national) developed through the 80's-90's

- By the late 1970's, Canada was facing major social and economic problems
 - 1980's-1990's mounting deficits and accumulating debt pushed Ottawa and the provinces to reduce public spending, especially in social areas
 - Reduction was only 3%, but the impact was high due to the ↑ need for services and the population ↑.
-

*“The Voluntary Sector is the
forefront of innovation.”*

Sherri Torjman
Reclaiming Our Humanity
Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2001

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Canada's Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Today

Just how big is the sector in Canada?

Nonprofit and voluntary organizations have:

- annual revenues that exceed \$112 billion; \$75 billion excluding universities & hospitals
- represents 7.8% of Gross Domestic Product
- over 2 million employees

And in Ontario?

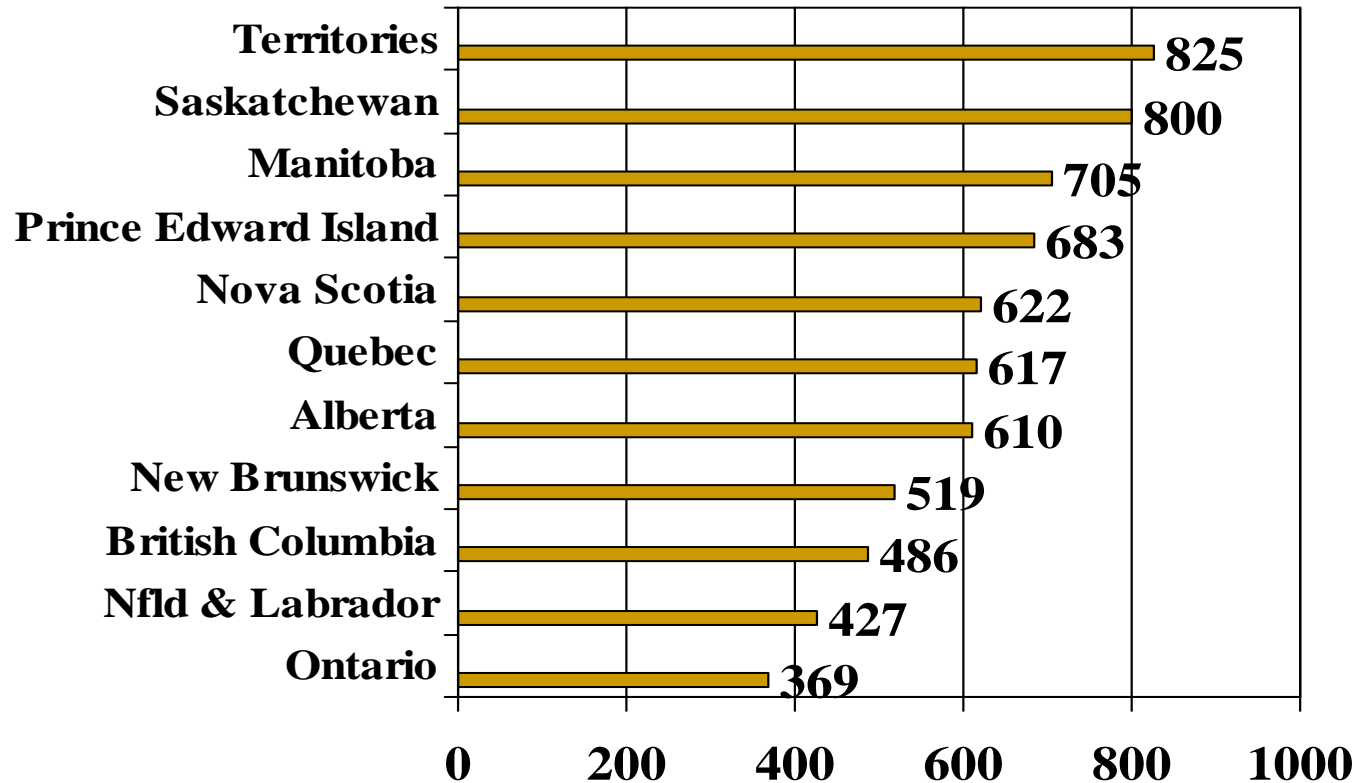
- annual revenues exceed \$45 billion
-

$1/10^{\text{th}}$

Is the amount of calories
you consume
every time you lick a stamp.

What province or territory
has the most
nonprofit and voluntary organizations
per capita?

Average number of nonprofit and voluntary organizations, per 100,000 population, by province or territory



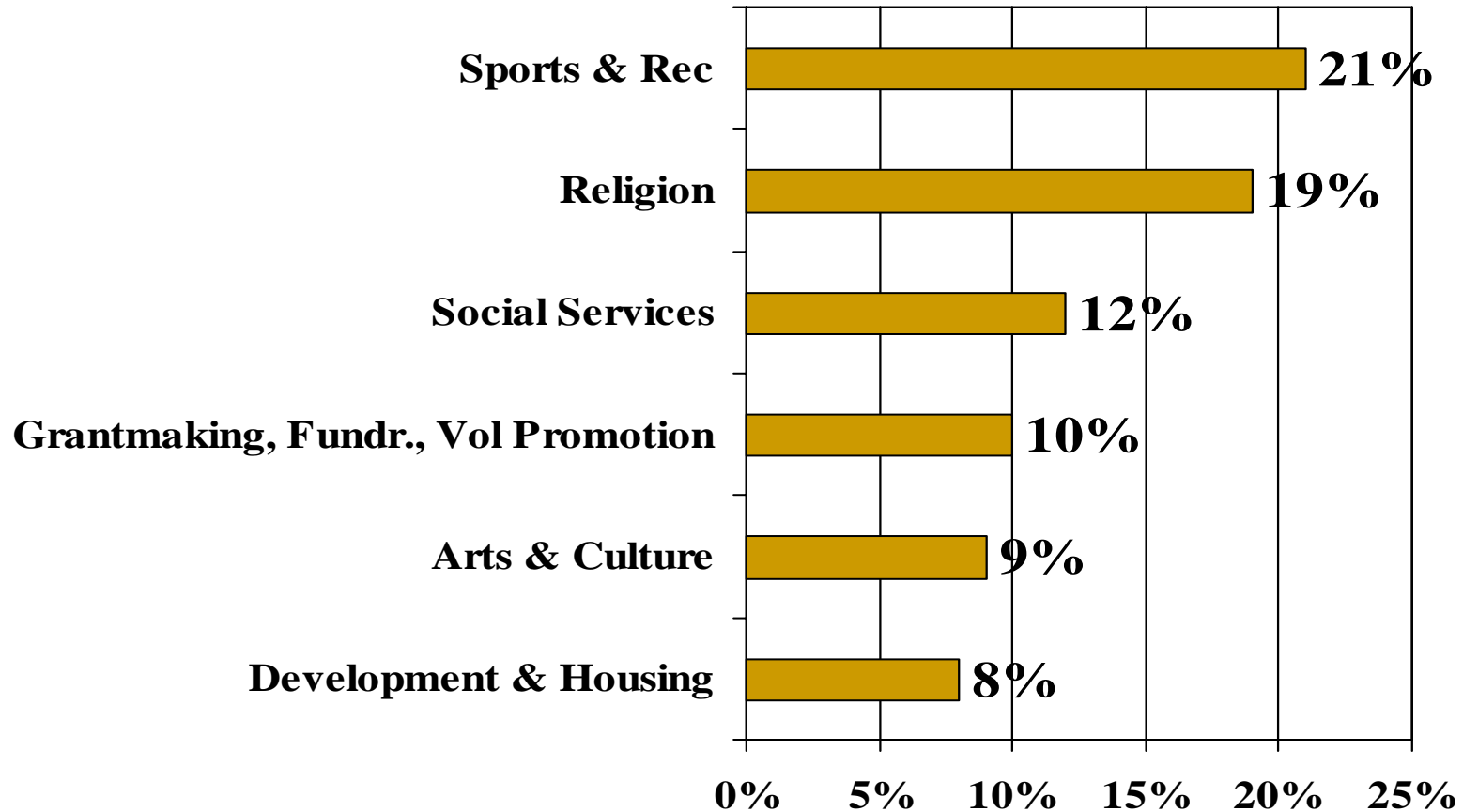
Average: 508

3

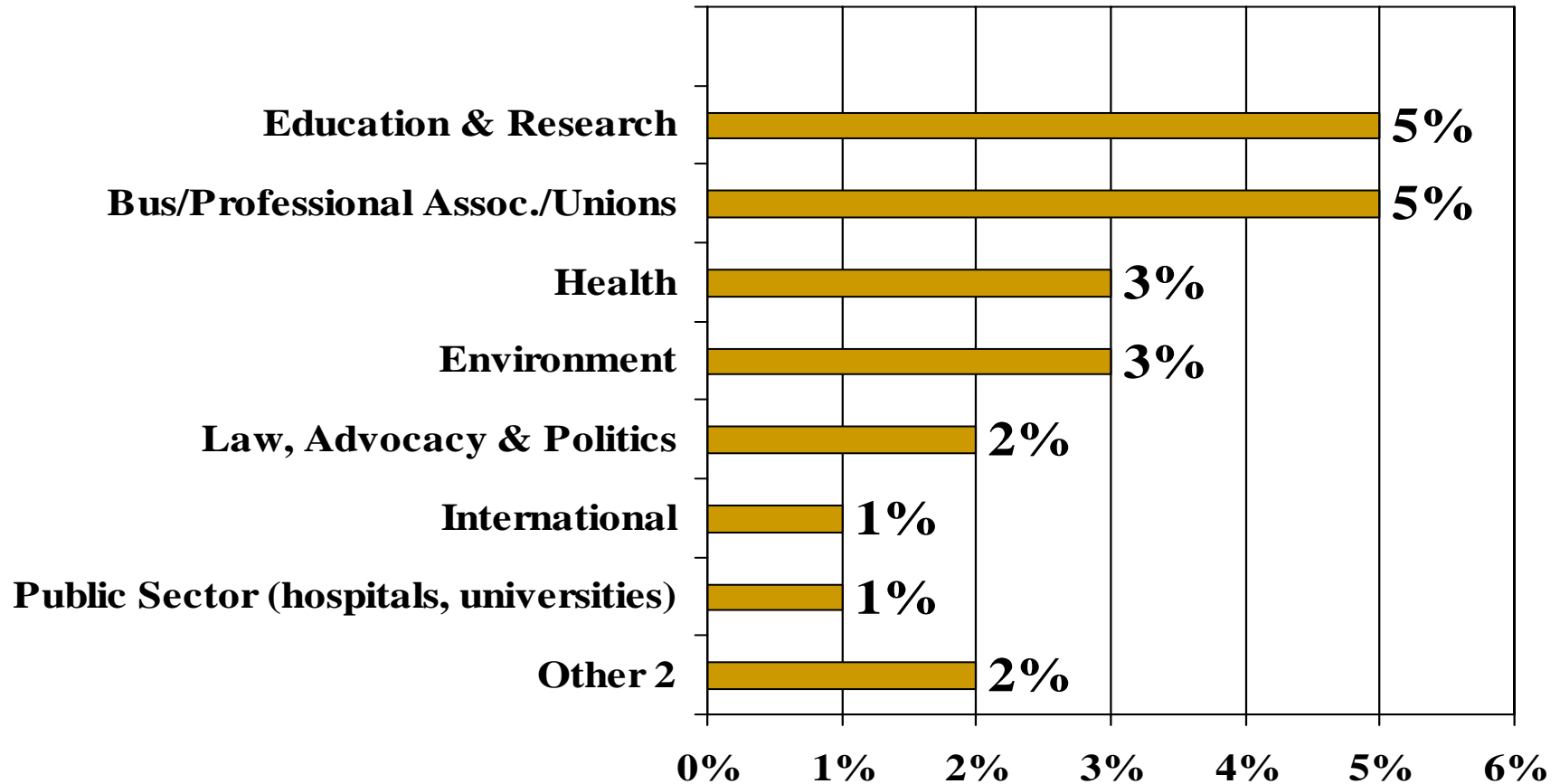
The number of years
a snail can sleep
without eating.

What sector/activity has the most
nonprofit and voluntary organizations
in Canada?

Top $\frac{3}{4}$ of nonprofit organizations in Canada by primary activity area



Bottom 1/4 of nonprofit organizations in Canada by primary activity area

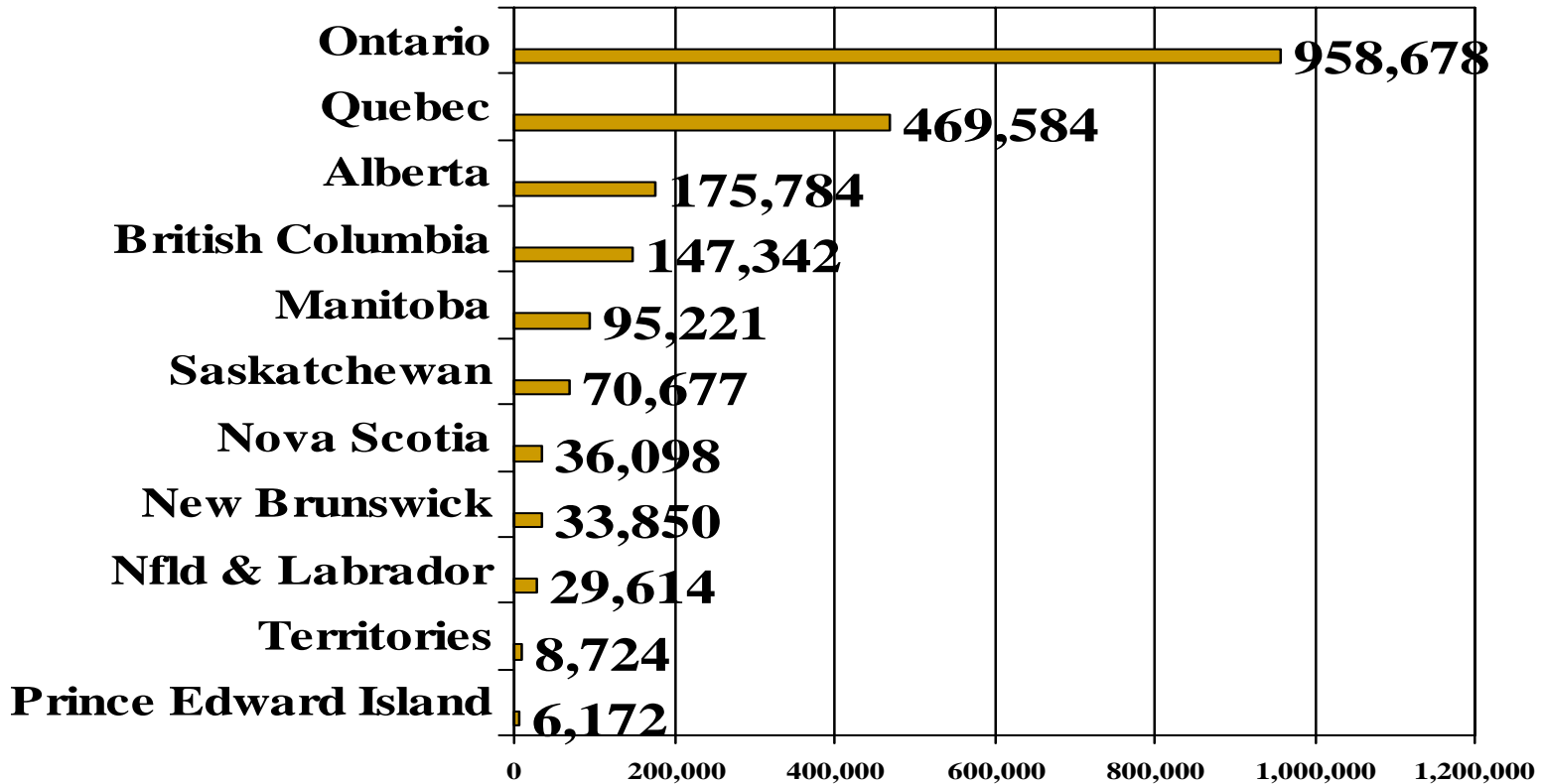


40%

The number of Americans
who iron their clothes
while wearing their underwear
or completely naked.

What province or territory
has the most staff employed
in the nonprofit and voluntary sector?

Nonprofit and voluntary organizations, paid staff, by province or territory



“Hospitals and Universities and Colleges together account for less than 1% of organizations, but employ 34% of all paid staff...”

“In contrast, Sports and Recreation organizations comprise 21% of all organizations... But account for only 6% of all paid employees. In fact, 73% of Sports and Recreation organizations have no paid employees.”

Cornerstones of Community: Highlights of the National Survey on
Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations 2004

Who do they serve?

Nonprofit and voluntary organizations, by population served, (% of all organizations that provide services to the public – some dual populations)

- General public 46%
- Children or young people 23%
- Elderly people 11%
- Persons with disabilities or special needs 8%
- Population in a particular geographic area 8%
- Professionals or professional groups 5%
- Organization members 4%
- Disadvantaged, needy, offenders 4%

/cont'd

**Nonprofit and voluntary organizations, by population served,
(% of all organizations that provide services to the public),
cont'd**

- Parents or families 3%
 - Aboriginal peoples or organizations 2%
 - Religious community 2%
 - People with particular medical problems 2%
 - Athletes, participants, enthusiasts 2%
 - Adults 1%
 - Students or schools 1%
 - Men only or women only 1%
 - Ethnic groups, visible minorities, immigrants 1%
 - Other 5%
-

Dogs and cats, like humans,
are either right or left handed..
or is that pawed?

How are they funded?

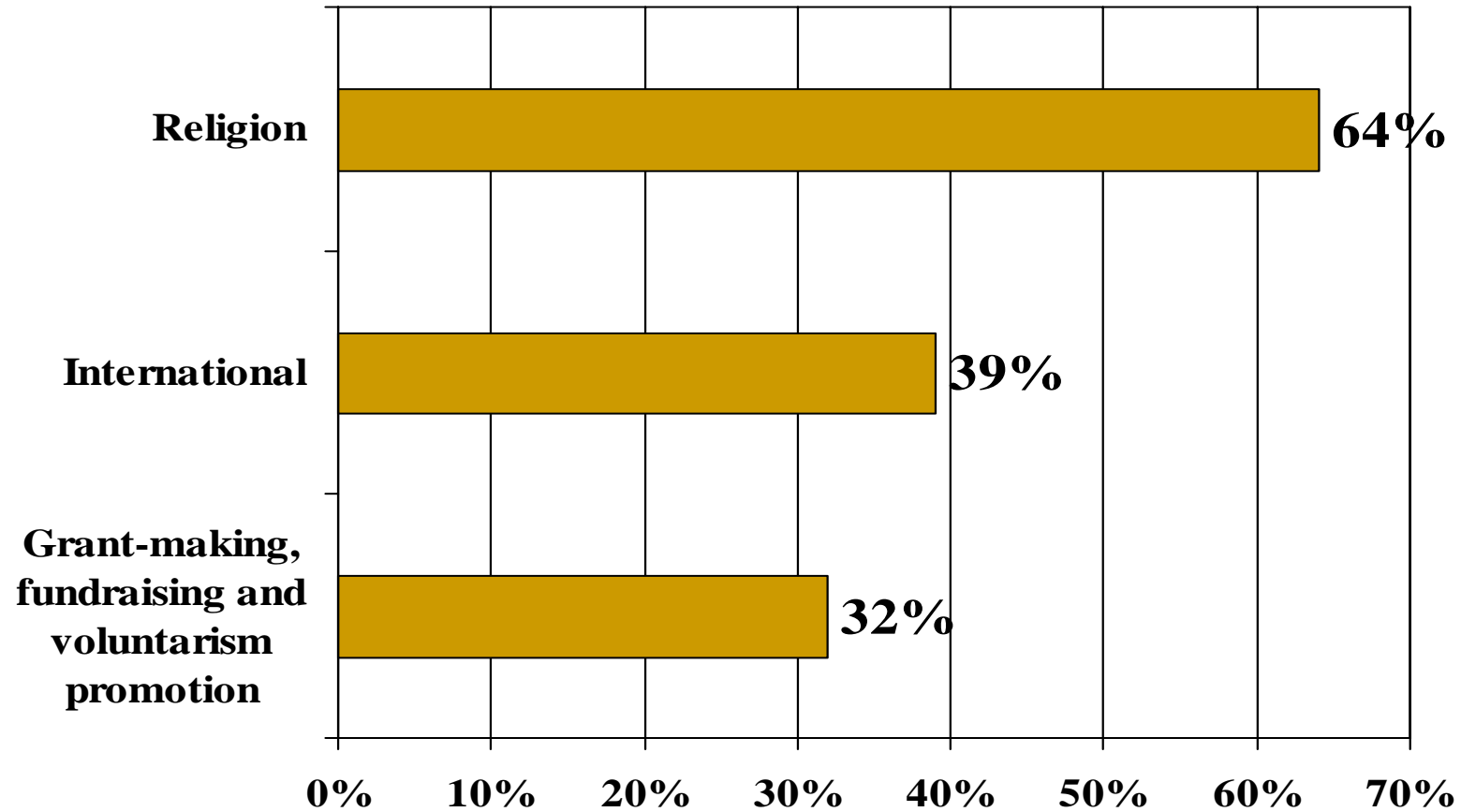
How much was donated by individuals to the nonprofit, voluntary sector (2003)?

\$8,370,000,000

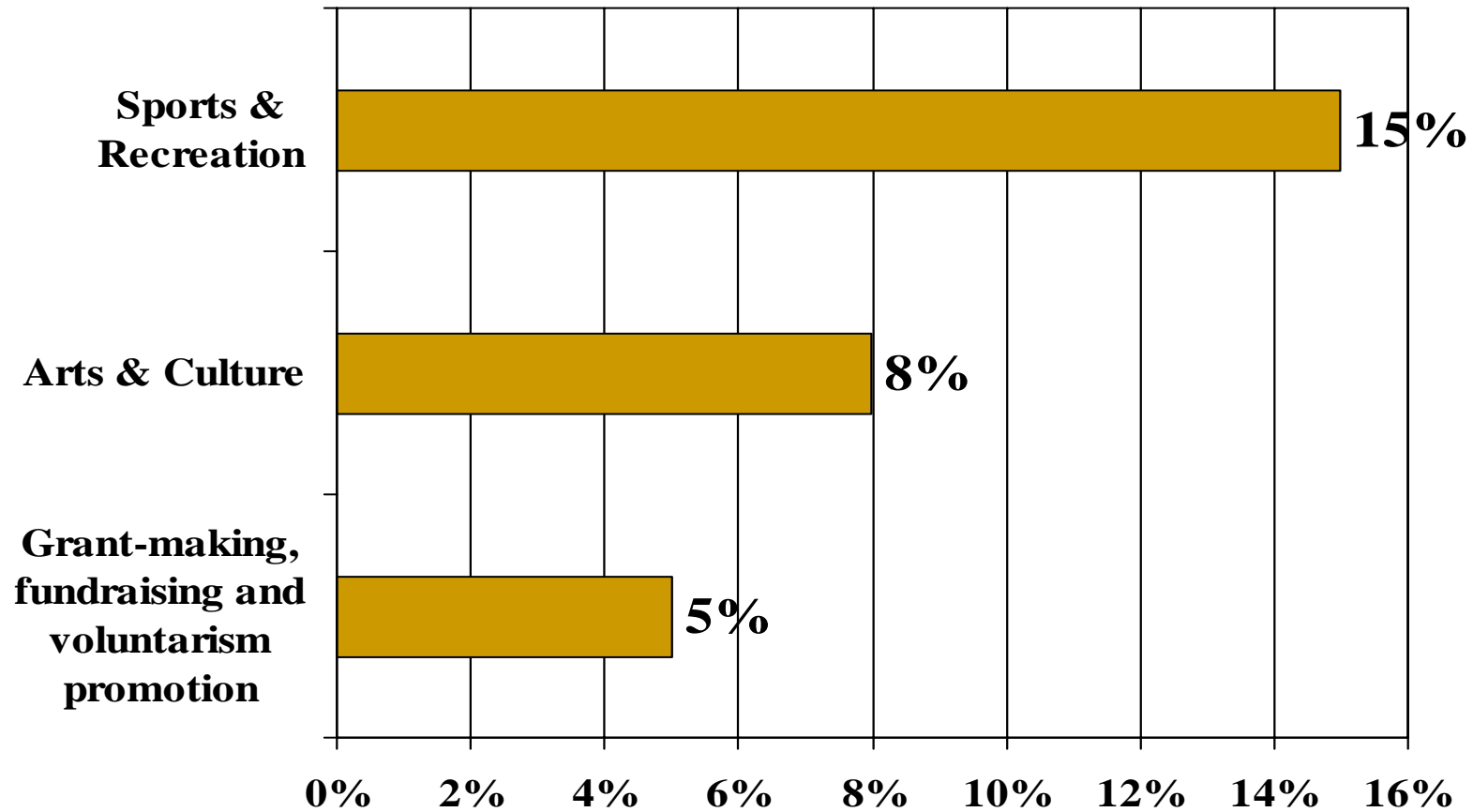
Total Gifts & Donations?

\$14,258,000,000

Gifts and donations as substantial source of revenue



Corporate sponsorships, donations and grants as significant source of revenue



Memberships

- 139,000,000 memberships to associations and organizations
 - An average of 4 memberships per Canadian
 - Middle-aged individuals (35-54) tend to belong to several organizations simultaneously, but for relatively shorter time spans
 - Older individuals tend to belong to fewer organizations, but for longer time spans
-

...and the volunteers?

- Almost 12 million Canadians volunteer (# of volunteers: low of 19% in Quebec and a high of 42% in Saskatchewan)
 - More than half of the non-profit organizations are exclusively run by volunteers (in Ontario this figure is 53%)
 - Collectively, 2 billion volunteer hours are contributed; equal to 1 million full-time jobs (Average hours donated: low of 139 hours in Alberta, high of 206 hours in Newfoundland)
 - Value of volunteer contribution estimated at \$14.1 billion
-

**Sports & Recreation organizations,
of Volunteers**

5,283,965

27.6% of all volunteers in Canada

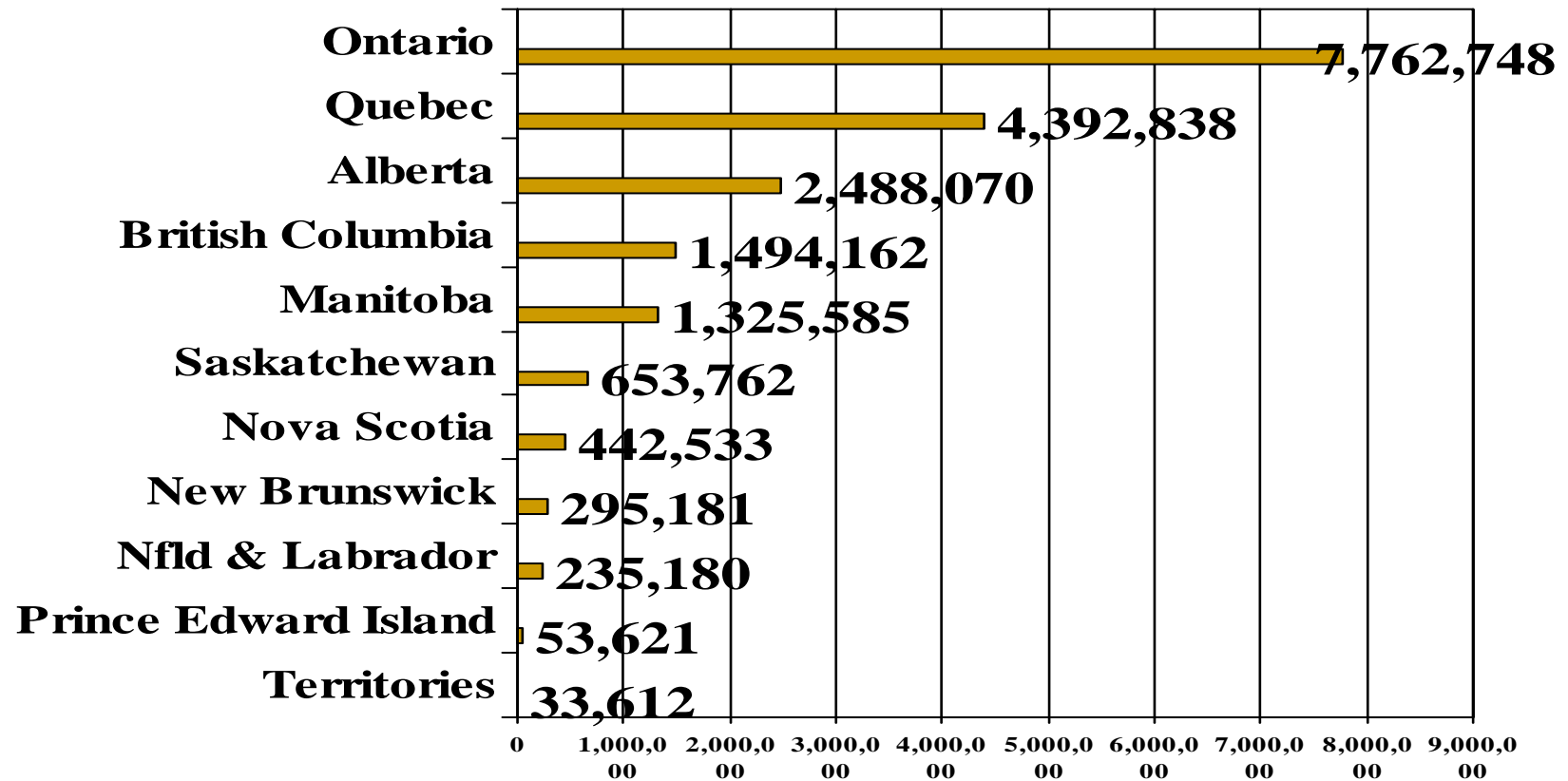
22.8% of all hours donated

100 and 10

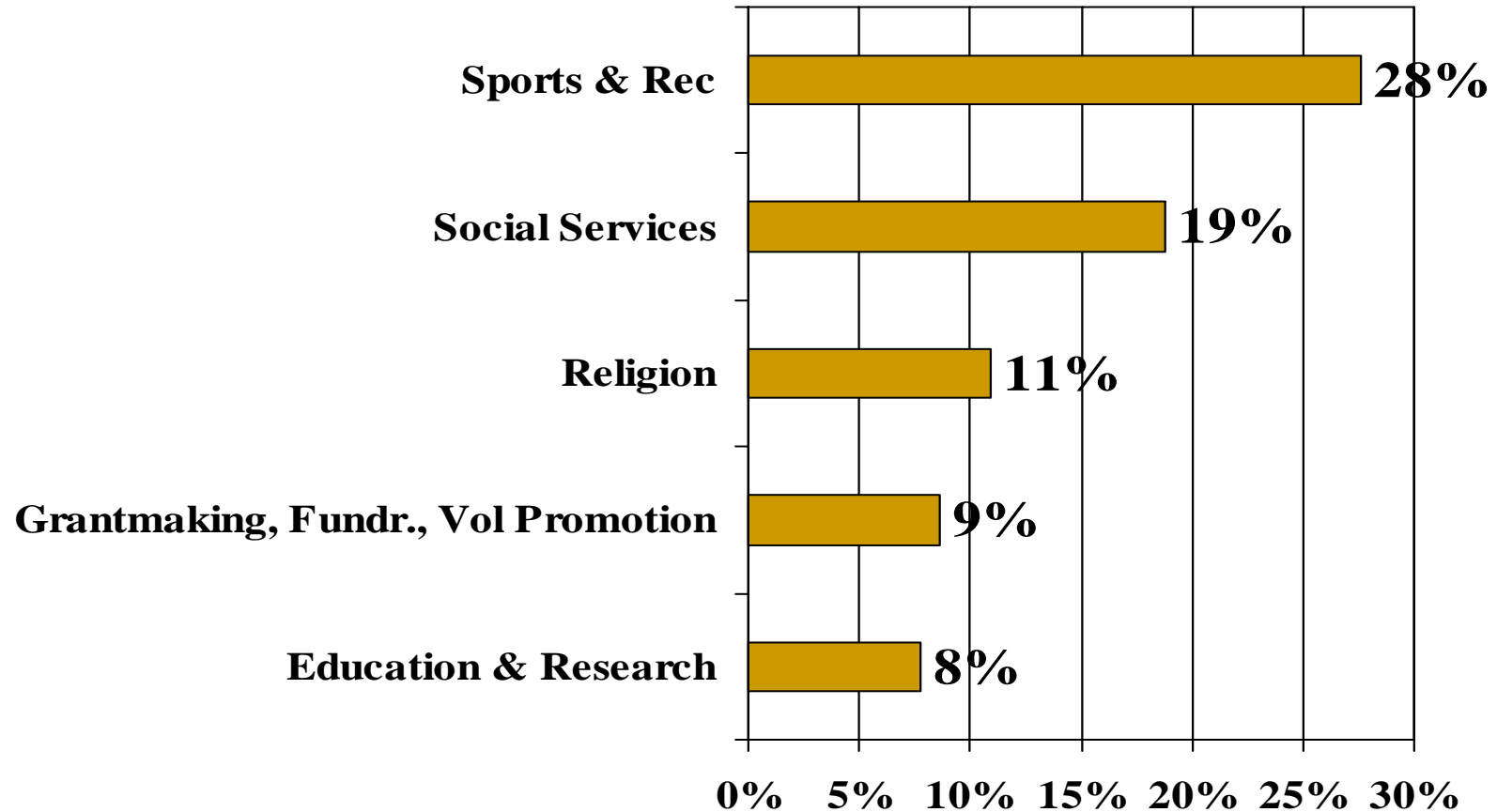
100 the number of vocal sounds cats have, and
10 the number for dogs.

Which province or territory
has the most volunteers?

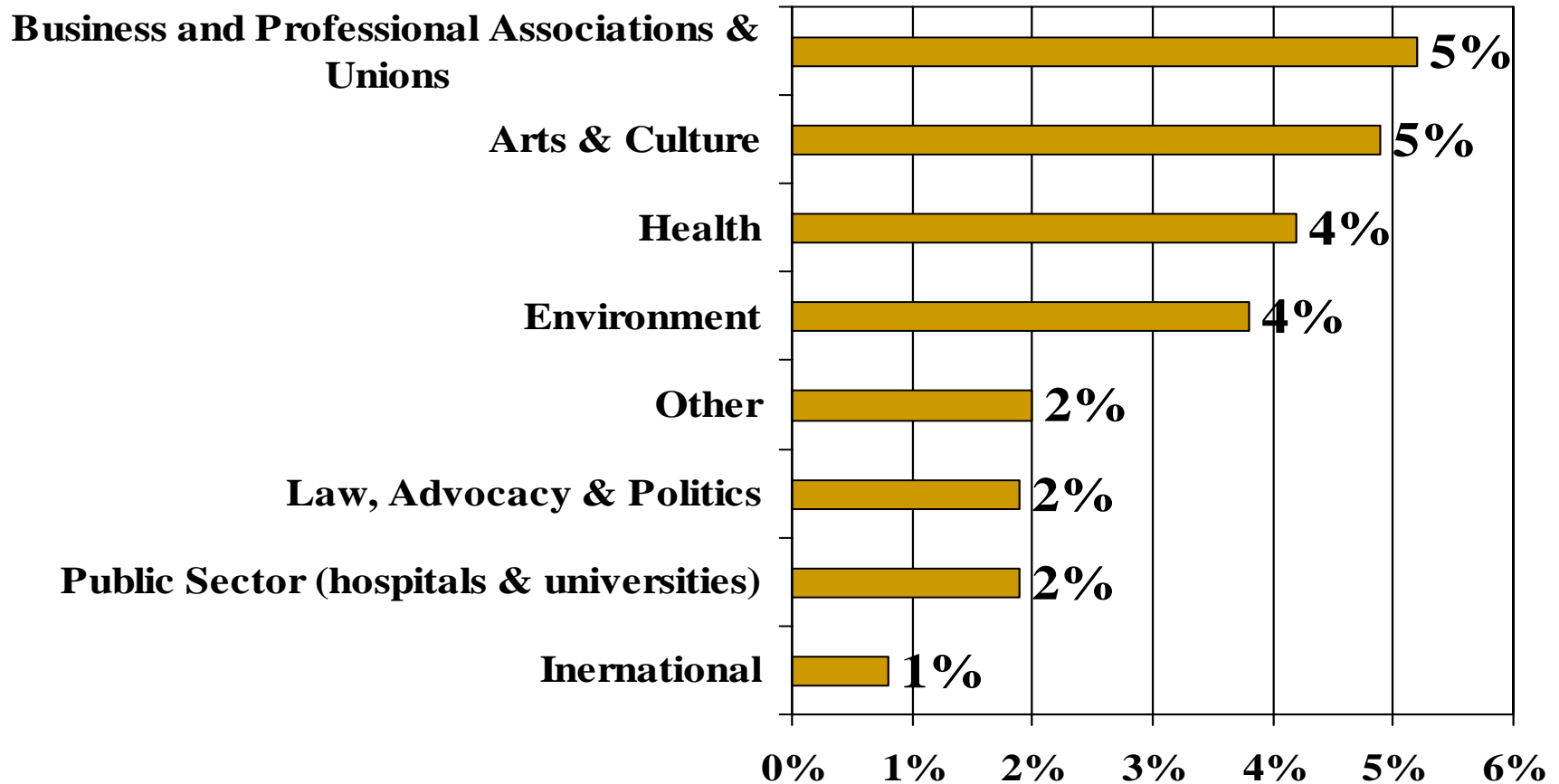
Nonprofit and voluntary organizations, # of volunteers, by province or territory



Top $\frac{3}{4}$ of nonprofit organizations in Canada by % of volunteers



Bottom ¼ of nonprofit organizations in Canada by % of volunteers



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Canada Compared to the Rest of the World

*“The way you shoulder the cares,
the fears, the helplessness of others
transcends the everydayness
of our lives.*

*The way you accord the dignity and
respect to many of those who feel
bereft or robbed of it.*

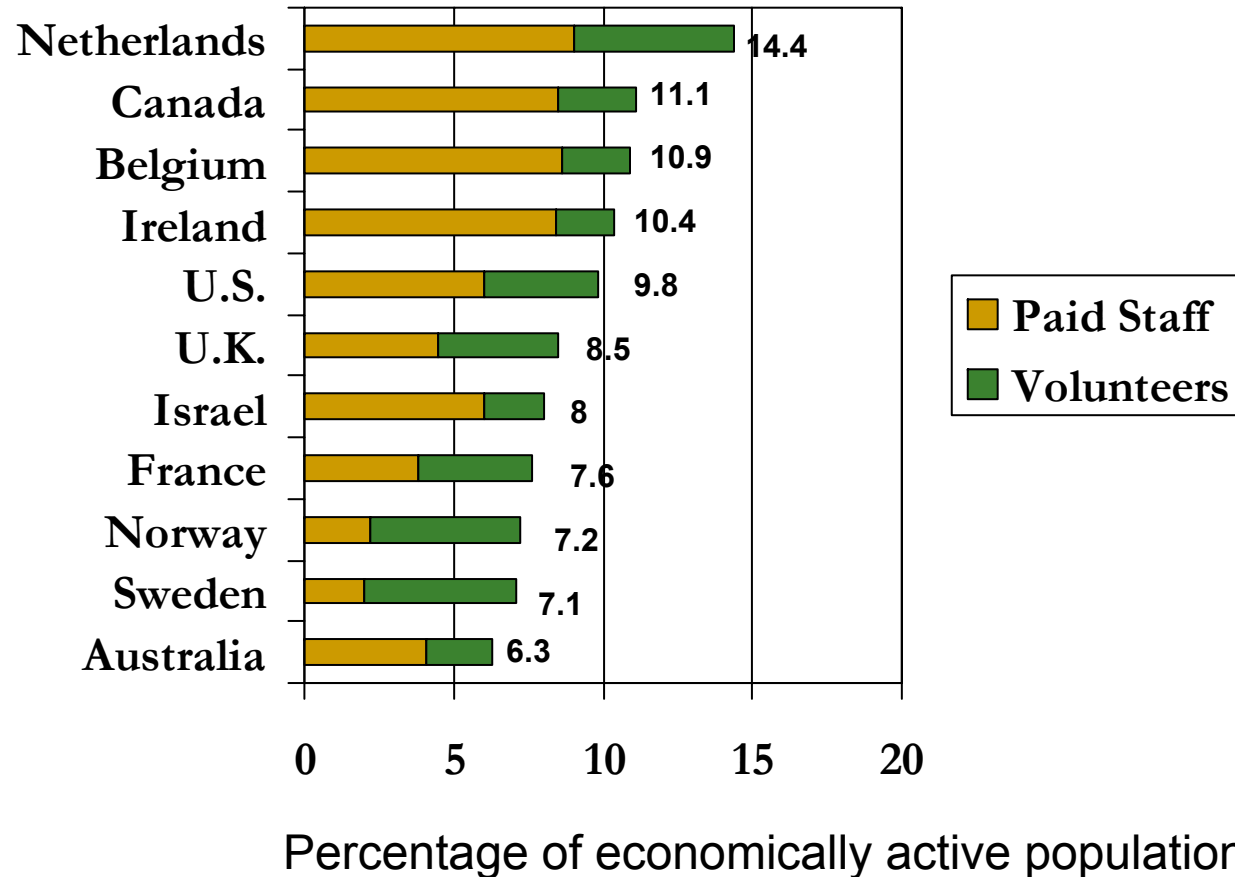
*You carry for us the heart
of our country.”*

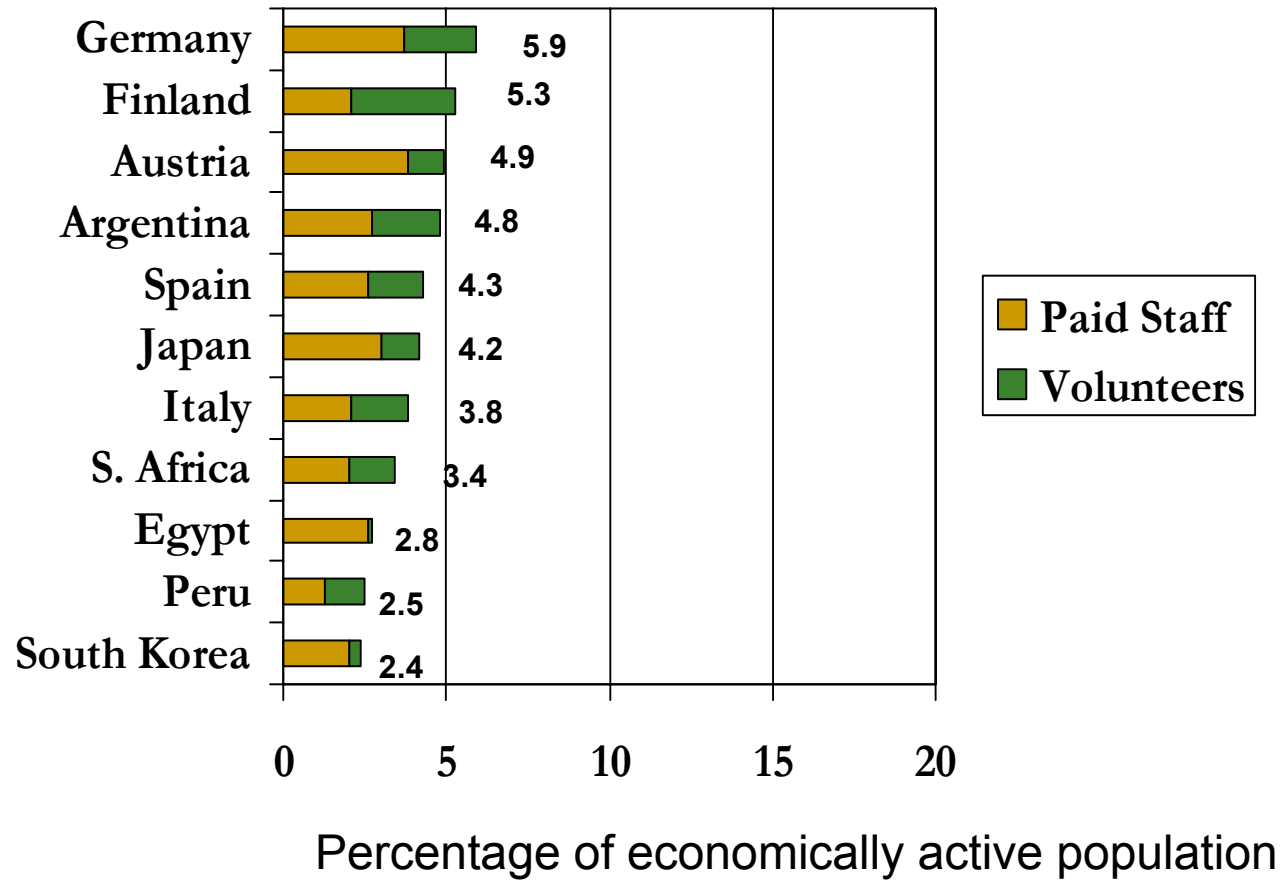
The Right Honorable Adrienne Clarkson
expressing her gratitude of Canadian volunteers
2004

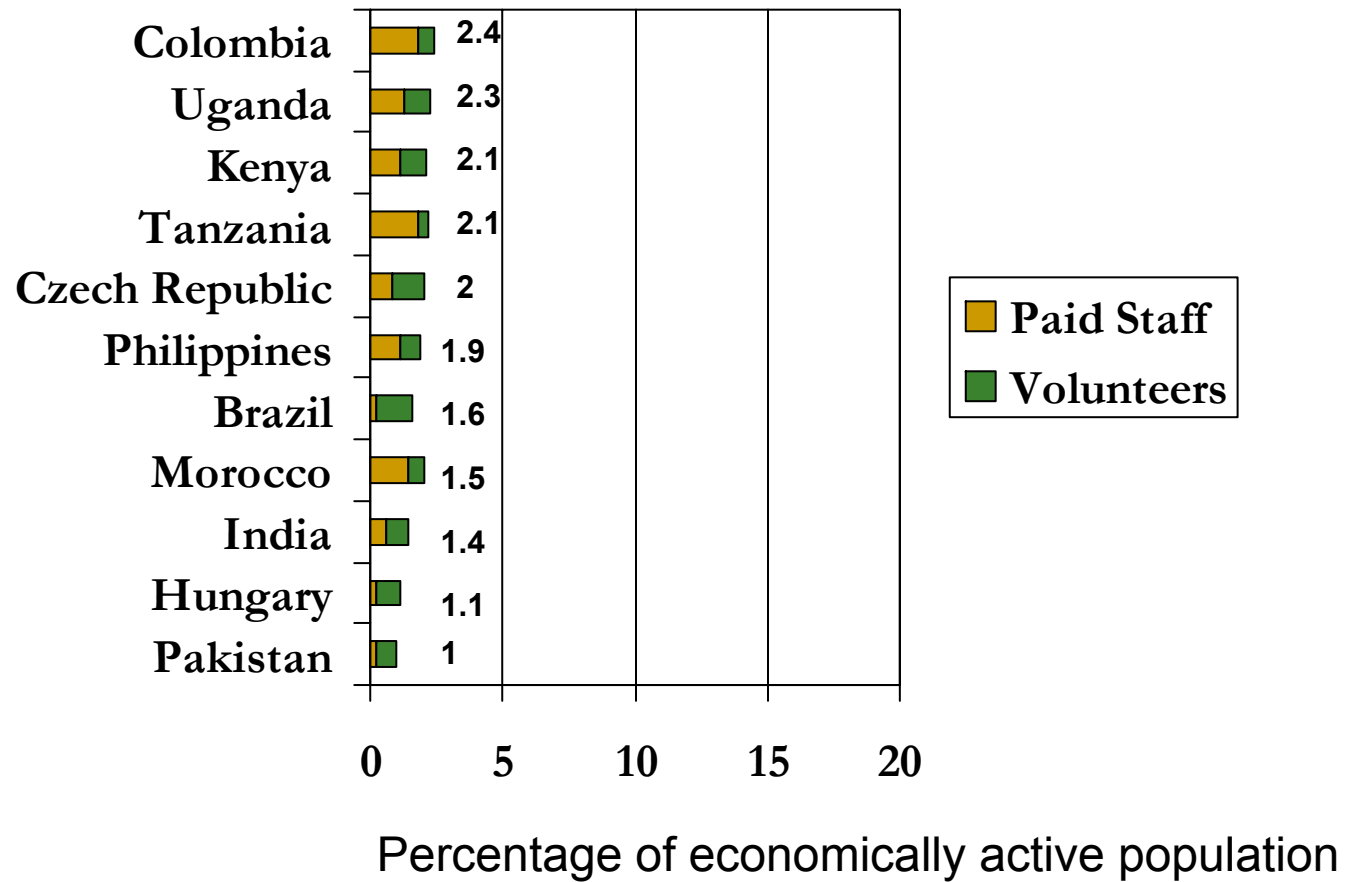
It's impossible to sneeze
with your eyes open.

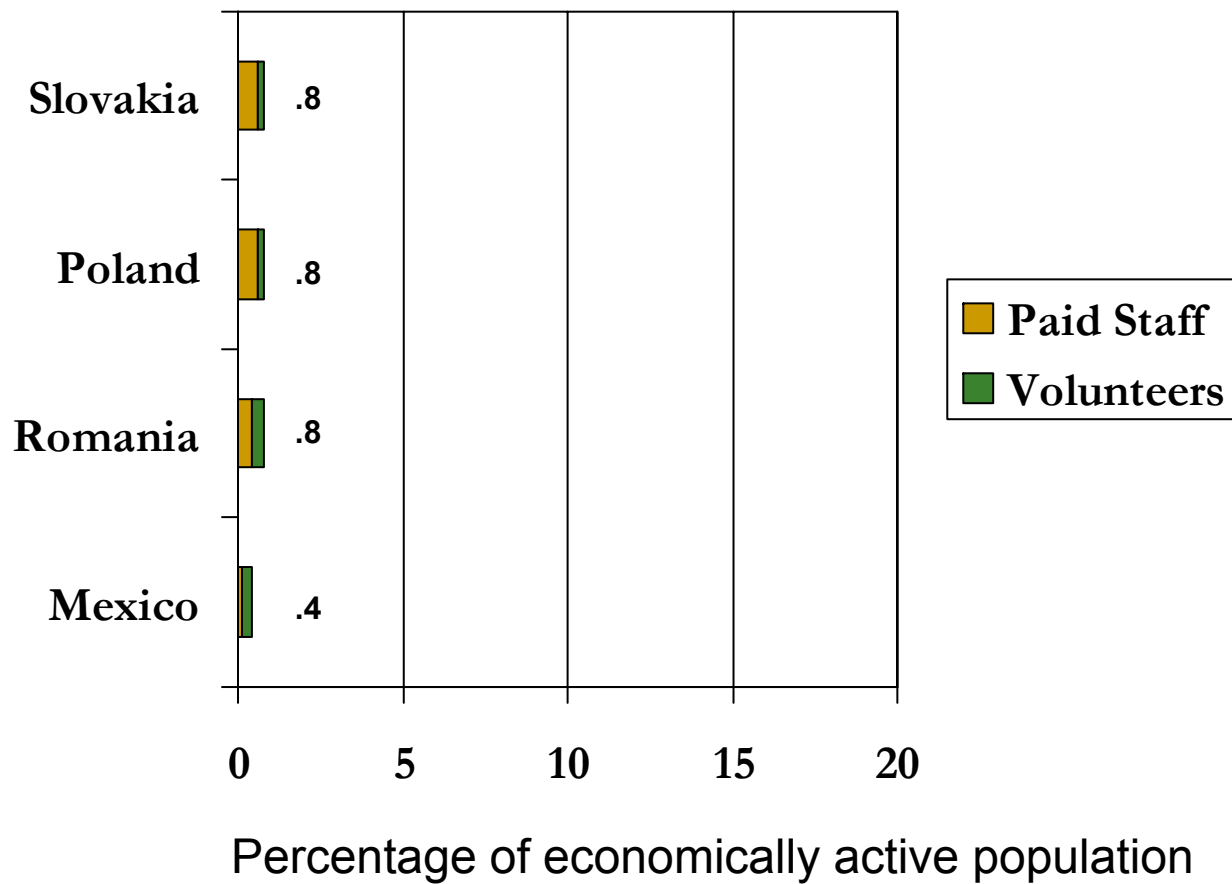
Which are the top 3 countries in the world in terms of the size of their nonprofit and voluntary sector?

Nonprofit and voluntary organization workforce as a share of the economically active population, by country









There are more nutrients
in the cornflake package itself
than there are in the actual cornflakes.

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Civic Engagement: What Has Changed?

“This is about a fundamental shift in something that has been a part of our Canadian way of life. Our civility, our community mindedness are absolutely distinguishing characteristics of this country and Canadians.”

Paul Reed, Statistics Canada, 2007

Declining voter turnout

1999 58%

2003 57%

2007 53%

Elections Ontario



Increasing donation rates

Results cannot be fully explained:

- ↑ donations: some analysts state that there was a switch from donations of time, to donations of money (i.e. increased of 10% @ \$500 mil)
 - However, other analysts disagree with this conclusion, as population growth alone would have increased volunteering by 27 million hours – not decreased it
-

Declining volunteer rates

The 2000 NSGVP showed:

- Volunteering declined significantly between 1997 and 2000 – almost 1 million fewer volunteers (i.e. 7.47 mil to 6.51 mil)
 - Decline of 56 million hours
 - Despite adoption of ‘mandatory volunteering’ in high school’s in several provinces (youth dropped 12%); and there was a 2.5% population increase in the 15+ age range
-

Multi-Year National Study Findings

2004: Giving & Volunteering

1. The largest part of giving and volunteering are performed by a small proportion of the population. That group appears to be shrinking slowly.
 2. Overall incidence of volunteering shows signs of being flat at best or in a very slow decline of perhaps 1-1½% per year.
 3. The large number of incidental or occasional volunteers appear to be rising, and they are contributing less.
 4. The much smaller component of committed volunteers are contributing rising amounts of time.
 5. The smaller pool of committed long-term volunteers is slowly being replaced by individuals whose volunteering is more short-term, episodic, and involving fewer hours of activity each year.
(29% 1987; 22% 2003)
-

Multi-Year National Study – cont'd

6. The incidence of giving may have risen slightly since 2000 but the volume of charitable dollars contributed, most of all large-donation givers, has risen significantly.
 7. Giving and volunteering varies across regions due in part to differences in regional cultures; and religious affiliations.
 8. Supportive attitudes by Canadians toward nonprofit and voluntary organizations have been weakening.
 9. Canadians' direct personal giving, helping and caring appears to be expanding, while for the majority, volunteering through organizations is flat or slowly declining. Institutional means of achieving the collective good, may be in declining favour among Canadians.
 10. People who participate embrace a particular set of values, or ethos that includes explicit acknowledgement of and support for the common good.
-

“We need to understand how extensively we depend on volunteers and civic engagement in this country.

There’s not a single Canadian who isn’t touched by volunteering in some meaningful way throughout the course of their lives.”

Linda Graff, 2007

Nonprofit and voluntary organizations reporting problems, by primary activity area

	Primary Activity Area *top ¾ nonprofits				
General Problem Area	Sports & Recreation	Religion	Social Services	Grant-making, fundraising	Arts & Culture
Volunteer Human Resources	62% recruiting 30% training	48% recruiting 29% training	59% recruiting 48% training	42% recruiting 26% training	59% recruiting 44% training
Financial Issues	50%	28%	57%	41%	63%
Planning & Development	45%	42%	55%	39%	51%
↑ Demand for Services	40%	32%	65%	42%	41%
Infrastructure	32%	31%	54%	28%	51%
Relationships	27%	14%	30%	23%	28%
Paid Staff Resources	21%	20%	40%	15%	32%

4

The number of noses on a slug.

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How Will This Impact Canada?

“Communities are the platform upon which a population’s habits are formed. Healthy behaviours, education, and interactions with others are developed within this setting.. There is significant evidence that supports the fact that well-designed and supported communities enjoy significant benefits over communities that are not.”

Chris Markham
*Ontario’s Growth Projections
and the Important Role Not-for-Profits Play*
2006

A Town without Volunteers...

cancellation of all minor sports programs
fewer programs at local YMCA and YWCA's
local special events, parades and celebrations end
cancellation of little theatre
cancellation of summer playground programs
neighbourhood associations are dissolved
senior centres are closed
museums, art galleries and heritage centres discontinue programs
and services; no fundraising results in cut-backs
city advisory committees dissolve
municipal, provincial and federal polling and voting procedures
become virtually ineffective

A Town without Volunteers...

social services organizations cancel many programs
community foundations and United Ways fail to meet fundraising goals
no one answers telethon phones; pledges are not received
churches and other faith communities cancel children's programs and outreach
service clubs cease to exist
no Scouts and no Guides
Big Sister and Big Brother programs are cancelled
employment training programs end
adult literacy classes are stopped
blood donations end making surgery impossible; people die
environmental groups shut down

A Town without Volunteers...

research linked to universities, hospitals, new medications, slows to
the point where cutting-edge innovation is truly a thing of the past
drivers no longer available to take the ill to medical appointments
leisure buddies and volunteer attendants no longer assist individuals
with special needs

taped books read for the blind end

animal control seriously hindered, resulting in increased spread of
disease

soup kitchens, food banks and school breakfast programs end,
malnutrition and even starvation surfaces

hospices send patients home, where there may/may not be a family
caregiver available to assist

A Town without Volunteers...

one-on-one and mentoring programs no longer exist
multi-cultural associations discontinue support to new Canadians
board of director run organizations suspend operations effecting
strategic and day-to-day service delivery
political parties lose committed volunteers
parent teacher associations are dissolved; no fundraising results in
fewer library books, computers, extra-curricular activities
crisis lines cancelled
victim support services halt
some towns, buildings burn down
no one organizes a public demonstration against a new government
policy, and civil liberties are ultimately lost
disaster relief is a disaster

Vibrant communities promote inclusion to enable all members to participate actively in social, economic, cultural and political life.

When communities are not vibrant,
poverty levels rise
which directly impacts local residents' access
to economic and social opportunities.

These demographic, social and economic forces are additive:

- Poverty in old age grows
 - Health problems, accidents and below-average school performance for children
 - Increased unemployment and low wages for adult children of poverty
 - Increased demands on the health system
 - Increased mortality rates

 - ↓ community health
 - ↑ demand for services
 - ↓ tax revenues
 - ↓ economic resiliency
 - ↑ government expenditures
-

2 and 4

2 the number of weeks
an average mosquito lives, and

4 the number of hours
an average dragonfly lives.

“If... the volunteer rate is an indicator of social cohesion and the vigour of Canadian democracy, even the 1997 participation rate of 31.5%, fewer than 3 in 10 – is low.”

*The Canadian Volunteerism Initiative
The Report of the National Volunteerism Initiative Joint Table
2001*

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What Can We Do About It?

“We shouldn’t be in this position to begin with, but we have neglected our voluntary sector and taken for granted that volunteers will always be there. While many countries around the world are investing huge amounts to develop and support volunteerism, we’re watching it fizzle away here in Canada, and little is being done. That has to change.”

Linda Graff, 2007

“Today more than 80% of Canadians live in urban areas – making Canada the second most urbanized nation in the world.”

“Countries that invest in their cities and communities will be the 21st century’s success stories.”

*Neil Bradford, Research Fellow,
Community Building: Seizing the Opportunity
Canadian Policy Research Networks, Nov 8, 2004*

What affects the likelihood of voting?

“A new line of research has challenged some age-old assumptions about why people vote, suggesting it’s concern for the welfare of others – not narrow self-interest – that sends people to the polls.”

“A sense of altruism was even more influential than people’s age, income, or education level, generally considered the most important factors for voting.”

Jason Marsh, *The Altruistic Electorate, Greater Good*, Fall 2007

What affects the likelihood of being a volunteer?

strong positive variables:

1. Age
2. Civic participation
3. Involved in informal direct helping

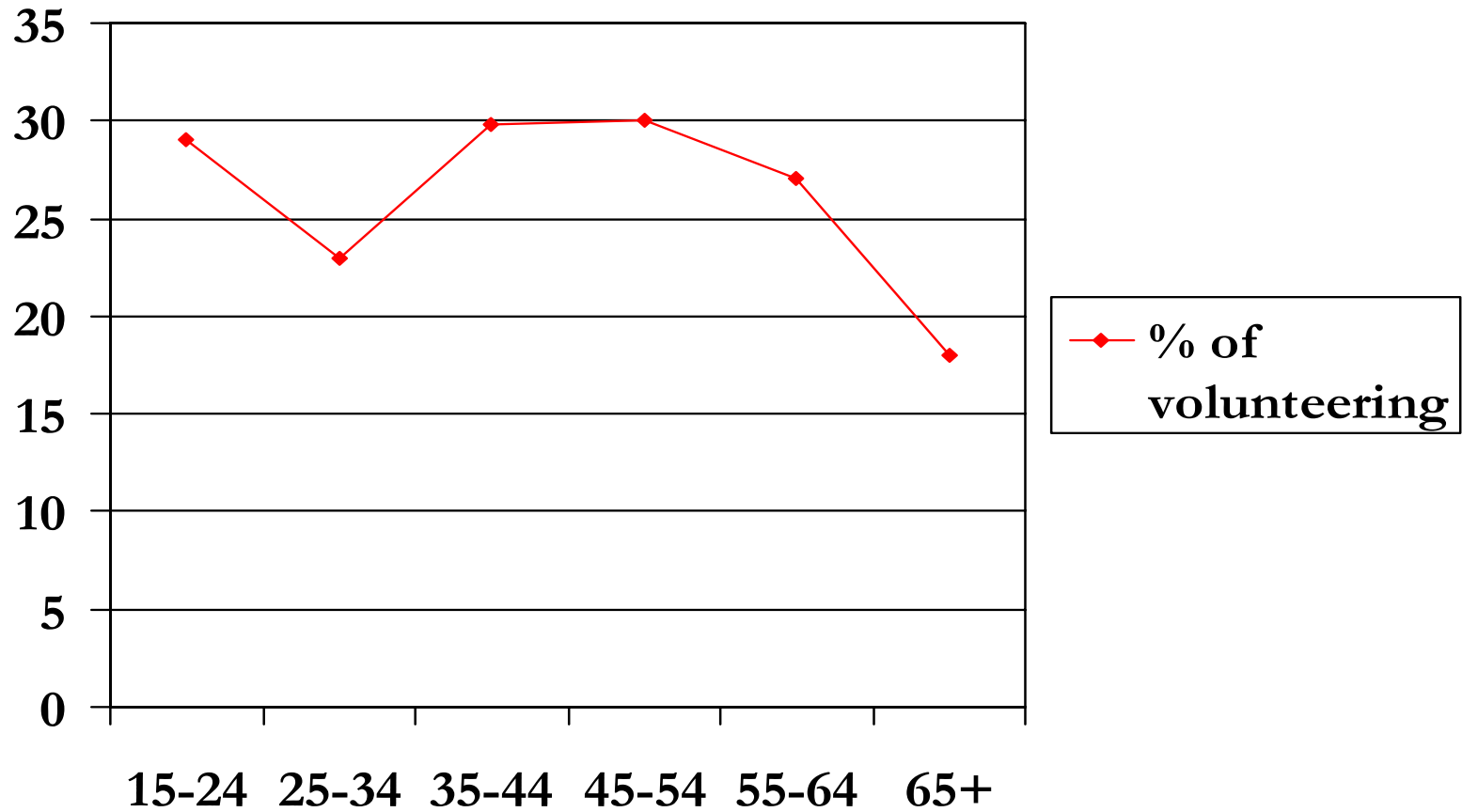
moderate positive variables:

1. Religious attendance
2. Youth experiences
3. Satisfaction with life
4. Level of education

weak positive variables:

1. Household income
 2. Hours of paid work
 3. Voting behaviour
 4. Years resident in the community
 5. Children ages 6-12 in the household
-

Volunteering Across the Life Cycle



What affects the likelihood of charitable giving?

strong positive variables:

1. Engaging in informal helping
2. Household income
3. Frequency of religious attendance
4. Age

weaker positive variables:

1. Civic participation (i.e. membership in organizations)
2. Education
3. Children 6-12 in the household
4. Following current events

categorical positive variables

1. Being a volunteer currently
 2. Having had a positive volunteering role model as a child
 3. Having had parents who were volunteers
-

What has <i>no</i> impact on volunteering:	What has <i>no</i> impact on donating:
gender	religiosity
marital status	social participation
immigrant status	control in life
ethnicity	health status
religiosity	immigrant status
children aged 13-17 in the home	marital status
	voting behaviour

Men leave their hotel rooms
cleaner than women do.

Do we care?
What can we do about it?
The issue is complex...

“Volunteering is essential to healthy communities in several ways. First of all, there is something that we call a civic syndrome; we know that people who volunteer have a set of other characteristics that generally go together in a cluster.

And if their volunteering is diminishing, if it’s slipping, it may be a subtle indicator of a weakening of this civic syndrome, because all of these measures go together.”

Paul B. Reed, Statistics Canada, 2007

Is there is a syndrome or a subculture of volunteering,
giving and participating?

*What do you think these factors, demographics,
characteristics might be?*

Economic Resources: Household income; hourly earnings; hours worked per week

Human Capital Resources: Age; education; occupation; health

Social Connectivity Resources: Social networks through membership organizations and personal relations; religious affiliation and attendance; years resident in the community; family contributory and children in the household

Socialization and Social Learning: Experience in organizations as a youth; exposure to role model as a youth

Personality Traits: Ethos - values/beliefs/ideals (common good, personal responsibility, worldview that is inclusive and interconnected, belief in social justice); self-versus-other directed; satisfaction with life; source of control in life

What can we do?

1. With our volunteer programs
 2. With youth
 3. With seniors/retirees
 4. With our communities
 5. With corporations
 6. With government
-

*“What you will do, matters.
All you need, is to do it.”*

Judy Grahn, Another Mother Tongue, 1984

Interested in hearing more?

Visit:

Who Cares? *A way-of-life wake-up call
for Canada's communities.*

www.CanadaWhoCares.ca

The next time you sneeze,
50% of you will try to
keep your eyes open.

(Okay, I made this one up...)
