

SosyalBen Foundation Research Report "Volunteering"

SosyalBen Foundation Volunteering Research Report

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"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"
Martin Luther King, Jr.

Expanding the number of volunteers by increasing awareness regarding volunteering plays a crucial role in extending the influence of civil society in local and national dimensions and the relevant public institutions, and maximizing the benefits it provides to individuals by enhancing the perception of volunteering. Volunteering contributes to both the personal and sometimes professional development of individuals and social solidarity in an intertwined way (Ziersch & Baum, 2004). Thus, it is essential to understand the opinions and expectations of individuals who are currently volunteering or have experienced volunteering. As the SosyalBen Research Council, after our preliminary studies, as it can be seen in this report that comprises the quantitative analysis of 384 observations obtained through an online questionnaire we conducted between September 21 and October 16, 2020, we examined the issue in the principal axes of volunteering motivation, gains from volunteering, and suggestions for increasing age-based awareness and the future of volunteering.

Our sample has a relatively young profile; 85.7% of the participants are between the age of 18 and 25, the former being the minimum age requirement for participation in the questionnaire. Although sources indicate that women are more prone to volunteering (Wilson & Musick, 2007), it is also highlighted in the literature that there is no significant difference between sexes for participating in volunteering activities (Dünya Bağış Endeksi, 2018; Windsor et al., 2008). Women constituted 82% of the sample of this research. In this study, descriptive analyses, correlation analyses, and simple linear regression models were used. Many results supporting the literature were obtained together with new findings. At this point, the lack of primary quantitative data in the literature on volunteering should also be underlined. Rich data infrastructure is essential to measure the broad range of needs, expectations and general patterns, and potential transformations. In this context, our research is aimed to contribute to the fields of civil society and academia. Most participants (88.5%) of the research are active or graduated volunteers of the SosyalBen Foundation, showing that our research is in a format that is close to being a case study. Although we cannot generalize the results to Turkey's population due to this methodological framework, the suggestions we offer based on our findings would be practically feasible and potentially beneficial steps towards the development of volunteering in Turkey.

In concluding this part, I would like to thank the entire team, especially Ece Çiftçi, the President of the SosyalBen Foundation, my dear colleagues Berra Karayel, Doğa Dilbilmez, and İlayda Eskitaşçioğlu for their support and making this research possible, and also to our participants for their contribution to our research by taking part in our questionnaire.

Dr. Aslı E. Mert
President of SosyalBen Academic Council

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Executive Summary
3	Introduction
4	Volunteering in the World and in Turkey
4	Historical Development and Current Structure of Volunteering
5	Legal Framework of Volunteering and Sustainable Development
6	Obstacles to the Realization of Volunteerism Potential in the Literature and Basic Needs
8	Findings and Analysis
8	Descriptive Results
9	Findings on Motivations for Volunteering
11	Results Regarding the Gains from Volunteering
12	Increasing the Awareness of Young People about Volunteering
15	Increasing the Awareness of Middle Aged and Older Individuals about Volunteering
15	Results Regarding the Gains from Volunteering
16	The Association Between the Elements of Volunteering
18	The Effect of the Related Components on Satisfaction with Volunteering
23	Conclusion
25	Bibliography
27	Notes



Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a quantitative study based on the analysis of 384 observations that are valid and suitable for analysis, derived from the questionnaires completed by individuals volunteering or have done volunteering at the SosyalBen Foundation and other institutions. The report shows the participants' motivation for participating in, their expectations of, and their gains from volunteering activities, and the investigation of these and other relevant elements concerning life satisfaction and happiness achieved with volunteering. This research also comprises a literature review that presents basic descriptive statistics on volunteering in the world and Turkey. The main findings of the research can be summarized as follows:

- While 88.5% of the participants are those who have previously volunteered or are currently volunteering at the SosyalBen Foundation, where 782 volunteers are actively working according to current information, the remaining 11.5% is individuals who are current or previous volunteers of various public institutions, NGOs and universities.
 - The average age of the sample is 23.2. The highest rate for the duration of volunteering is 44.3% corresponding to the participants who have been volunteering for 1 to 3 years.
 - The families of 85.9% of the participants support their volunteering activities. For 82.8% of the participants, volunteering has an important place in their lives.
 - The rate of those who think that volunteering positively affects their level of happiness is 69.8%, the rate of those who think that engaging in volunteering activities increases their life satisfaction is 70.6%, and the rate of participants who think that engaging in these activities increases their respectability in the society is 58.9%.
 - Regarding the participants' motivations to volunteer, it has been observed that altruistic motivations (to help others) are prominent reasons in line with the literature. While the most preferred option regarding volunteering motivation was "volunteering following one's life view and personal philosophy" (60.9%), the second most preferred answer was "helping others" (53.6%). Although most of the participants were young, these motivations were followed by "wanting to leave a better future for my child / my children" (33.1%). This situation can be evaluated as an indicator of young participants' optimistic, conscious, and willing attitude towards the future. Despite the popularity of motivations that are focused on "being helpful to others", the least effective motivations for participating in volunteering activities are determined as "the desire to be accepted and appreciated in society" (0.3%), "influenced by social media posts" (2.1%) and "academic purposes" (2.3%).
 - Regarding the gains obtained from volunteering, the participants' most significant gain is the "moral satisfaction of the feeling of making a contribution to society without expecting anything in return" (64.3%). Also, it was observed that "skills related to teamwork" (33.6%) and "information that could help in future profession" (31.6%) were among the major gains. The lowest rates regarding the gains obtained from volunteering were found in the options "passing a course and receiving course credit" (0.3%) and "finding a job through volunteering activities" (1.6%).
 - According to the participants, the most necessary step to increase young people's awareness regarding volunteering is to include volunteering in the curriculum/syllabus. Besides, directing people to volunteering activities through well-known people and role models, and sharing awareness-raising posts on social media are stated to be effective methods.
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- In terms of raising awareness among middle-aged and older individuals about volunteering, it has been observed that traditional media comes to the forefront instead of social media (for example, sharing public service announcements on TV). The most preferred option to increase this age group's awareness is to ensure that employees actively participate in social responsibility projects that are undertaken in collaboration with workplaces. Moreover, the recommendation to encourage parents and extended families' involvement in volunteering programs designed for children and youth has come to the fore.
 - The most preferred five statements regarding the issues that need be developed in Turkey in terms of volunteering can be listed as follows:
 - Volunteering in Turkey has not yet been sufficiently institutionalized. (56.8%)
 - The number of volunteers is not enough, and there is not an adequate level of awareness regarding volunteering in society. (52.9%)
 - A legal regulation that determines the definition of volunteering, non-governmental organizations' responsibilities, and volunteers' fundamental rights is a need in Turkey. (47.7%)
 - State support for volunteering activities is not sufficient. (35.2%)
 - Non-governmental organizations that function mainly based on volunteering lack the necessary resources. (33.1%)
 - A statistically significant positive correlation was found between general well-being of participants and their well-being obtained from volunteering (satisfaction and happiness), and the degree to which they agree/disagree with the statements regarding the importance of volunteering in their lives, gaining a sense of responsibility from volunteering, and the positive impact of volunteering on their social lives (based on a scale ranging from negative to positive response [from disagreeing to agreeing]).
 - It is observed that satisfaction with volunteering can be explained by satisfaction with current volunteering conditions, views on respectability associated with being a volunteer, sense of responsibility gained from volunteering, the level of family support for volunteering, and the total time spent on volunteering.



Introduction

In 1985, the United Nations General Assembly declared December the 5th to be the World Volunteers' Day to promote volunteerism worldwide and expand volunteer participation (United Nations General Assembly, 1985). As a part of the celebrations of the International Volunteer Day in Turkey, within the framework of our quantitative research, mainly focusing on the SosyalBen Foundation, this report aims to analyse (mostly young) volunteers' motivation to participate in volunteering activities, their gains and expectations from volunteering. In the report, together with descriptive statistics about volunteerism in Turkey and the world, the definition and the functions of volunteering will be discussed within the framework of the relevant literature, as well as issues that need to be developed. In addition, future suggestions will be presented based on the results.

Cooper et al. (2006, p. 76) describe volunteerism as an individual or collective action which is undertaken to improve community life and in return for which no material gain is obtained. Palabıyık (2011, p.87) defines volunteerism as giving effort and time in non-governmental organizations, social initiatives or other institutions that allow voluntary participation to provide public benefit without expecting any financial return or benefit.

Despite the existence of varying definitions, the most widely accepted definition in international literature is the one provided in the Decision numbered 56/38 titled "Recommendation for the Support of Volunteering."¹ which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2001, the same year which was declared the International Year of Volunteering. According to this definition, volunteerism is *"a wide range of activities, including traditional cooperation and collaboration, and other types of civic participation, carried out by the individual with their own free will, with a motivation not based on materiality, for the benefit of individuals and/or other creatures outside of their family or immediate environment."* (United Nations General Assembly, 2001).

Certain distinctive features stand out in many definitions of volunteering. Dekker and Halman (2003, p.1) determined four criteria: being non-compulsory, being non-compensated, carried out within an institutional structure, and aiming for the public interest. Musick and Wilson (2007, p.1) provide three criteria for determining volunteer activities: not being carried out for financial gain, the individual's free will to participate, and being beneficial to both volunteers and third parties. The United Nations Volunteers lists three essential criteria of volunteerism in its comprehensive "The State of World's Volunteerism Report," published in 2011 (United Nations Program, 2011) as follows:

- The voluntary activity should be carried out with the individual's free will and should not be carried out within any contract or academic obligation scope.
- It should not be done for an economic benefit.
- Finally, volunteering should be in the public interest, benefiting people outside the family or household, and serve a particular cause.

In summary, it is possible to list the widely accepted primary criteria of volunteering as a free will, motivation not based on materiality, and doing something for others' benefit.

¹ The United Nations General Assembly decision 56/83, which can be described as the first step in which volunteering is placed in a normative framework, also presented considerations from the world to support volunteerism. Three of these considerations, which can also be accepted as basic principles, come to the fore:

1. Neglecting the implementation of volunteering policies can risk missing out on precious value and undermining the collaborative traditions that hold communities together.
2. There is no universal model for the best practice; a model that works in one country may not work in different cultures and traditions.
3. Supporting volunteering does not mean supporting the downsizing of the state or a substitute for wage labor.

Volunteerism in the World and in Turkey

According to the data collected by the World Giving Index based on 145 countries, the global participation rate in volunteering activities is 21.1% (World Giving Index, 2018). The countries with the highest volunteering participation are Indonesia, Liberia, and Kenya, where the participation rates in community volunteering activities are respectively 53%, 47%, and 45%.; Taking the world average as a basis, it has been determined that 22.6% of men and 19.5% of women perform volunteering activities, and participation rates are 21.4% for individuals aged 15-29, and 22% for individuals aged 30-46. For over 50, the participation rate is 19.8% (World Giving Index, 2018).

Regarding the participation in voluntary activities in Turkey, there is a lack of up-to-date and detailed data. According to limited-comprehensive and scattered statistical data, mostly presented by international organizations or national non-governmental organizations, the participation level of voluntary activities is low.

According to the World Values Survey 2014, which the Ministry of Youth and Sports uses as a baseline in the context of Turkey and which is the most up-to-date research published by official authorities, the rate of those who participate in any volunteer activity is 1.7%. For young people between the ages of 18-35, this rate is 7.7% (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2019). According to the statistics based on personal participation published by the Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TÜSEV), membership to non-governmental organizations, volunteering, and participation in social and political activism are low in Turkey: only 2.5% of the citizens are volunteer for social organizations and 4.2% volunteer for political organizations (TÜSEV, 2011, p.15). However, these rates do not include more informal forms of volunteerism conducted outside the formal structures, such as individual and corporate activism and activities related to community or neighborhood solidarity undertaken by 11.6% of Turkey's population (TÜSEV, 2011, p.37).

Historical Development and Current Structure of Volunteering

In many countries and cultures, volunteering is a part of beliefs and social traditions. For example, the *dugnad* concept, which defines collective voluntary work within the family and neighborhood in Norway, the *tatawa'a*, which means solidarity and charity activities other than religious duties in the Arab world in celebrations or difficult moments and the notion of ubuntu in South African culture, which describes the individual who works for the better position of the community around him/her, and who has a close connection with society, are cultural values closely associated with volunteering (The United Nations Volunteers Programme, 2011).

"Turkey and the United Nations Volunteers Youth Services Center" (2013) reports that volunteering activities are carried out in Turkey for a long time at the focus of social solidarity and religion-based charity, especially in the "imece" (collective work) culture. However, in the report, it is also stated that volunteering activities carried out through institutions which began to evolve parallel to Turkey's democratization process after 1980. The report stated that almost all non-governmental organizations were closed after the military coup of 1980. It was only possible in the 1990s for civil society to regain momentum: Leading organizations such as the Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG) and Education Volunteers Foundation of Turkey (TEGV), that only focus on volunteering, were established in this time (Turkey and the United Nations Volunteers Youth Services Center, 2013).

The expansion of institutional awareness of volunteering in Turkey was especially realized after the August 17, 1999, the Marmara earthquake. After the earthquake, vital interventions of the volunteers and aids increased the visibility of volunteering activities and NGOs. They led to the understanding of the importance of volunteering by the broad masses of the society and the idea that volunteering should become widespread (Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2019).

This awareness is in parallel with the awareness of volunteering in these countries after the 1985 Mexico earthquake, the 1990 Peru earthquake, and the 1995 Japan earthquake (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2019).

In the 2000s, volunteer participation, tangible impact, and institutionalization have increased significantly within non-governmental organizations. After an orientation with the EU acquis commenced in 2003, the new Law of Association in 2004, and the new Law of Foundations in 2008 entered in force, and a clear legal framework has been created. Some restrictions for non-governmental organizations to organize themselves have been removed (Turkey and the United Nations Volunteers Youth Services Center, 2013).

Legal Framework of Volunteering and Sustainable Development

Civil society organizations have been regulated through legal frameworks in Turkey; however, there is no law defining volunteerism, regulating volunteer management, or the volunteers' rights. The only legally regulated volunteer participation is under the 2005 "Regulation on Voluntary Participation in Provincial Special Administration and Municipal Services" which is of limited scope. In practice, there is no information regarding volunteer participation in local governments, under this particular regulation. According to Palabıyık (2011, p.110), participation in volunteer services has an important place in Turkey's administrative tradition, and it can be possibly systematically implemented through strategy and planning, since Turkey has a significant potential for the spread of volunteerism in local governments.

Volunteering is a subject that is mainly discussed within the scope of development policies in Turkey. According to the report of the United Nations Volunteers, development priorities set by the government under Turkey's 9th Development Plan (2007-13) and the 10th Development Plan (2014-2018) *"created a strong potential in order to provide a favorable environment for volunteering activities which can provide a significant contribution to Turkey's social economic and environmental development"* (Turkey and the United Nations Volunteers Youth Services Center, p.13). Although there is no explicit reference to volunteerism in these development plans, clear targets have been set, such as ensuring more active participation of all society segments in social and economic development processes by creating a sustainable environment where civil society can develop.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports declared 2019 as the "Year of Volunteering" and published the 2019 Volunteering Strategy. In this strategy, it has been clearly stated that *"in order to remove the obstacles to the widespread and institutionalization of volunteering; it is important to enact a framework law that sets out the basic principles governing the definition and principles of volunteerism, its legal recognition and approval, the legal status of volunteers, the relationship between volunteers and institutions and organizations that employ volunteers, and the integration of volunteering into development strategies and policies."* (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2019).

The United Nations Volunteers Programme, which is carried out under the United Nations Development Program (UNDP Turkey), has a coordinator office in Turkey. The United Nations Volunteers Program Coordinatorship in Turkey is working together with different stakeholders throughout Turkey to provide suitable conditions for volunteers, direct activities properly, and raise awareness (UNDP Turkey, 2019). In particular, within the World Volunteers Day scope, which has been celebrated since December 5, 1985, with the United Nations General Assembly's decision, various celebrations and activities are organized both on the field and in digital media.

In May 2013, with the initiative and permanent secretariat of the United Nations Volunteers program of Turkey, the National Volunteer Committee was established. The Committee, which The SosyalBen Foundation is also among its members, is a strategic advisory body that brings stakeholders together in volunteering to recognize, strengthen and popularize volunteering and take action in line with the principle of supporting cooperation.²

Particularly, the activities of the United Nations Volunteers are closely related to the Sustainable Development Goals. "17 Sustainable Development Goals," which is adopted by world leaders in September 2015, is a universal call for action to eradicate poverty, protect our planet, and ensure that all people live in peace and prosperity. It covers climate change, gender equality, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace, and justice.³ The Sustainable Development Agenda, which is aimed to be realized by 2030, clearly recognizes volunteer groups as one of the main stakeholders for realizing 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In Turkey, particularly all the voluntary activities within the United Nations are carried out in the focus of Sustainable Development Goals. (UNDP Turkey, 2019).

The contribution of volunteering to development has also found comprehensive coverage in the literature. According to Malhotra (2013), volunteering is both "*an inseparable part of development*" and "*for all citizens, being the subject of change and providing a meaningful contribution to such a transformation.*" Similarly, Aydınlıgil (2013) defines volunteering as a phenomenon that directly contributes to social development and is affected by these processes in return.

Obstacles to the Realization of Volunteerism Potential in the Literature and Basic Needs

Case studies on volunteer participation in Turkey are quite limited. There is no comprehensive resource that directly examines volunteering with a focus on age or gender. However, Boz and Palaz, in the research which they published in 2007, examined the factors affecting the motivation of the volunteers with a case study specific to the Community Volunteers Foundation in Turkey and drew the profile of the average volunteer in Turkey as follows: "22 years old, studying in Engineering, Economics or Business, living in the Marmara, Mediterranean or Central Anatolia Regions, spending around 201-251 Turkish Liras per month, the child of a family (a housewife mother and a retired or business person father) who live in a metropolitan city with a monthly income between 751-1,000 Turkish Liras, a male university student" (Boz ve Palaz, 2007, p. 643).

The main conclusions were drawn by Çakı (2014) from existing sociology literature on volunteering and how volunteering discourse is built in Turkey are: First of all, there is a consensus in the literature that modern and institutional volunteering is one of the fundamental characteristics of modern individuals and society, and that volunteering is very beneficial for society. Also, taking related statistics into consideration, Turkey has stayed quite behind compared to societies that are qualified as "developed" in the context of volunteerism, and almost "*failed*" in that matter in terms of both quality and quantity. Finally, it is urgent and priority to take the necessary measures to develop volunteering in the modern sense (Çakı, 2014, p. 198).

² Official website of the National Volunteering Committee. You can access this link: <http://ugkturkiye.org/about/> (last access date: November 10, 2020)

³ UNDP Turkey, "Sustainable Development Goals". You can access from this link: <https://www.tr.undp.org/content/turkey/tr/home/sustainable-development-goals.html> (last access date: November 10, 2020)

According to Betil (2013), one of the main reasons for the low rate of participation in voluntary activities and unfulfilled volunteering potential in Turkey is that most of the existing non-governmental organizations fail to adopt the principles of transparency and accountability. This situation causes skepticism and a lack of trust in society towards voluntary work and non-governmental organizations. Betil (2013) also attributes the lack of utilization of human potential, which is the most crucial resource for the development of civil society, to the fact that associations and foundations adopt a hierarchical structure and fail to motivate volunteers by giving them confidence and empowerment and argues that this situation prevents participation.

Çakı (2014) discusses the reasons for the inadequacy of voluntary research and data instead of Turkey's voluntary potential. As the primary reason for the unreliability of data on volunteering rates, Çakı underlines the informal volunteerism patterns that are not covered by the relevant studies.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports has set the priority basic needs of the voluntary sector in Turkey as *“establishing a solid legal, organizational and financial support structure and to achieve this, conducting regular research collecting statistical data, ensuring cooperation between institutions and enhancing the capacities of institutions engaged in volunteering activities”* (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2019). The primary purpose of this research is, as detailed in the report, collecting statistical data in line with these needs and also building a basis in a case study form for taking steps to increase the life satisfaction of volunteers, determining their expectations from the future, and raising awareness about volunteering within the framework of university-civil society cooperation, predominantly with the results achieved in the context of the SosyalBen Foundation.



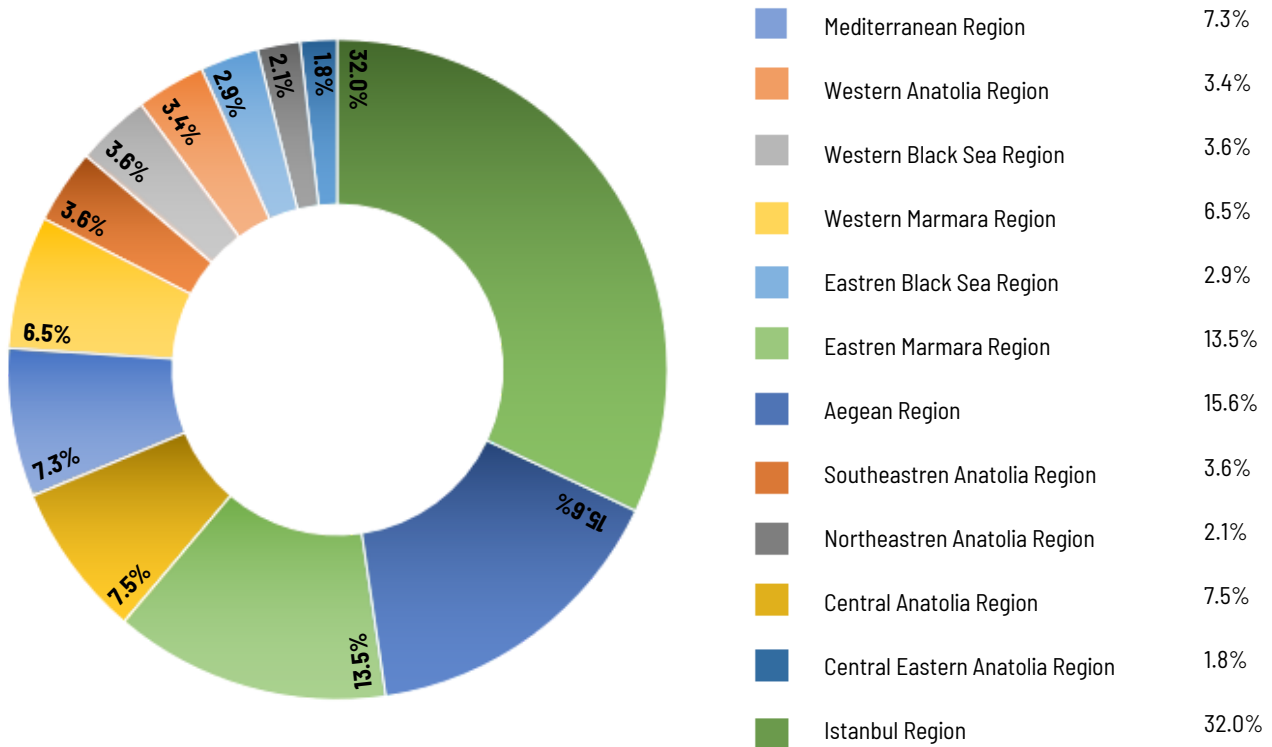
Findings and Analysis

Descriptive Results

Firstly, based on the descriptive analysis of 384 valid questionnaires, it is seen that the average age of the sample is 23.2. 88.5% of the participants is current or previous volunteers of the SosyalBen Foundation, 11.5% were or are volunteering in institutions and organizations other than the SosyalBen Foundation (public institutions, universities, other NGOs, etc.). Considering how long the participants have been volunteering in total, the rate of those who have volunteered for less than 1 year is 27.9%, the rate of those who have volunteered for 1 to 3 years is 44.3%, for 3 to 5 years, this rate is 18.5% while it is 9.6% for 5 years and over.

The families of 82.8% of the participants⁴ support their volunteering activities. It is seen that the rate of participants who stated that volunteering has an important place in their lives is again 82.8%. 69.8% of the participants state that their volunteering experience has a positive effect on their happiness level, while 70.6% argue that their volunteering activities increase their life satisfaction. The rate of the participants who argue that engaging in volunteer activities increases their respectability in society is 58.9%. According to 83.1% of the participants, volunteering affects their social lives positively.

Figure 1. Regional distribution of participants according to Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) Level ¹

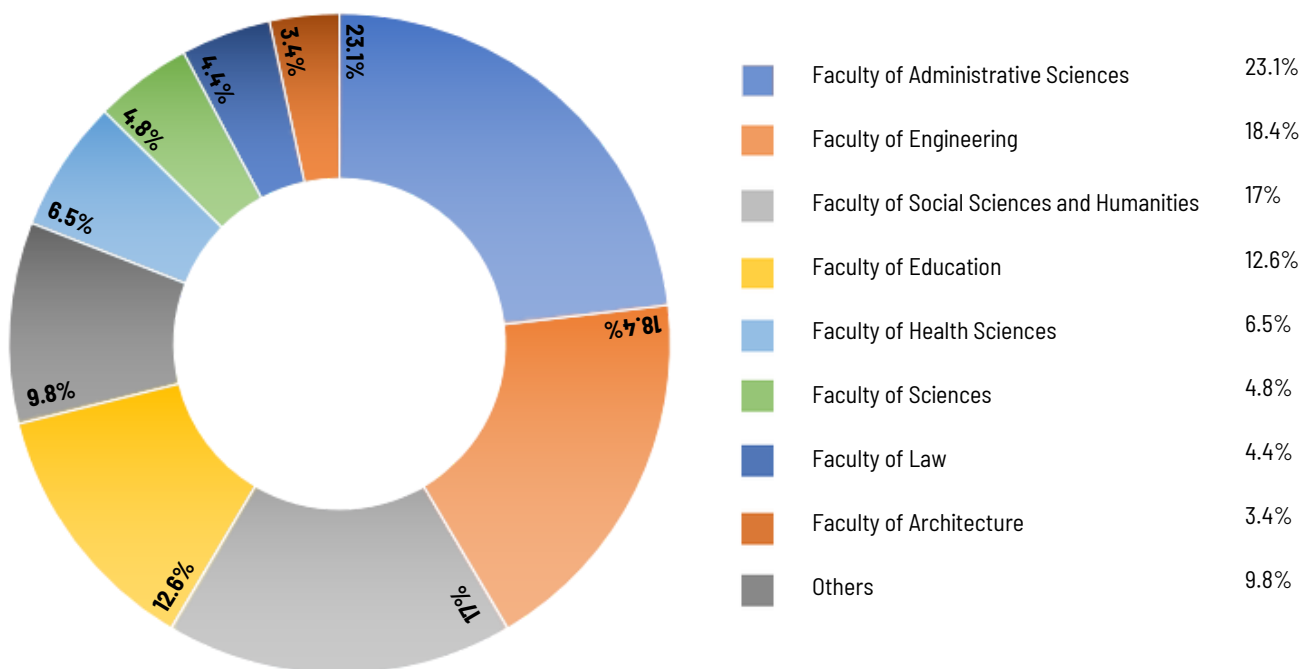


As shown in Figure 1, most of the participants reside in the Istanbul Region. The Aegean and Eastern Marmara Regions are ranked second and third, respectively.

⁴ All of the percentages in this paragraph are the rates of respondents who scored 8, 9 or 10 out of 10 on the respective statements.

⁵ Şengül, Ü., Shiraz, S. E. & Miraç, E. (2013). Turkey Statistical Region Units in DEA Method for Determination of Economic Activities of Level 2 by Classification and Application Tobit model. Yönetim Bilimleri Dergisi 11(21), 75-99.

Figure 2. Distribution of participants (who are still students) by faculties



As seen in Figure 2, most of the participants attend the Faculty of Administrative Sciences, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, and Faculty of Education.

Findings on Motivations for Volunteering

When participants were asked about their motivations for volunteering, it was observed that the highest rates belonged to the statements associated with altruistic reasons as underlined in the literature. The fact that "helping others" as a motivation is the second most preferred response (53.6%, see Figure 3) supports the arguments and findings in the literature regarding the subject. Although the mean age shows that our sample is predominantly young, motivation to leave a promising future to children was the third most preferred answer (33.1%). This result indicates young people's awareness and willingness to contribute to change and future development.

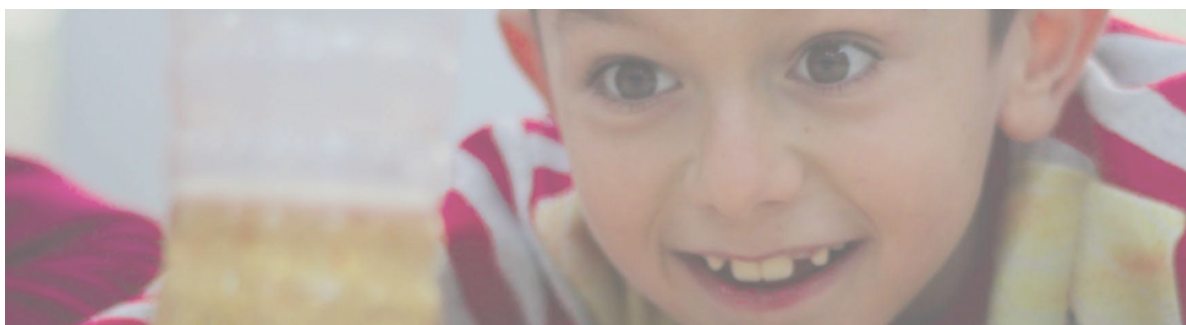
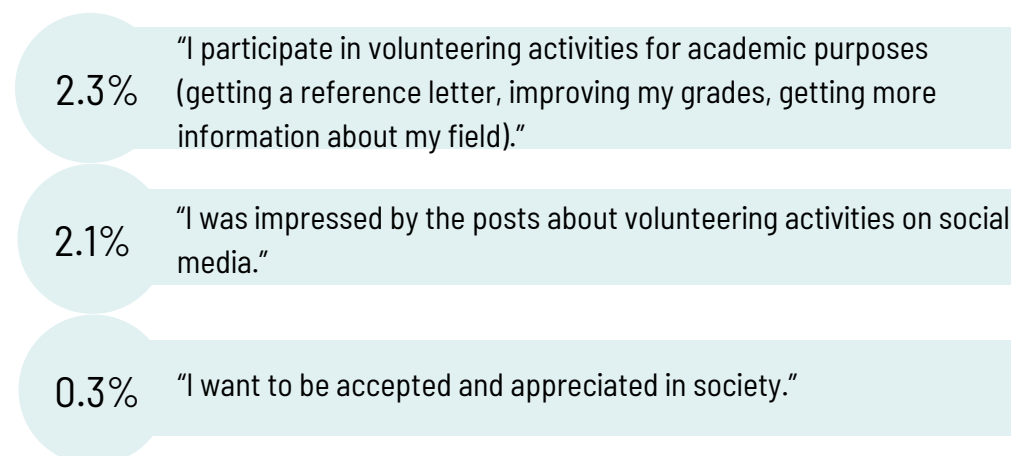


Figure 3. The five most preferred options among motivations for volunteering



According to the participants' responses, the desire to "be accepted and appreciated in society" is the least preferred option among the motivations for participating in volunteering activities (0.3%, see Figure 4). This result is in line with the basic principles of volunteering (volunteering for others' benefit, without expecting something in return), as presented in the literature review section.

Figure 4. The three least preferred options among motivations for volunteering



Simultaneously, although social media tools are used very actively by young people (Durak & Seferoğlu, 2016; Erol & Hassan, 2014), social media posts' content as a volunteering motivation was observed to be weak. When we look at the primary motivations, this result is compatible with altruistic definitions related with volunteering. In other words, only a very few (2.1%) participants decided to volunteer by being influenced by the publicity or posts on social media, and intrinsic motivations were expressed more.

Also, academic goals (2.3%) were one of the least preferred motivation sources. In the light of these findings, it can be said that it may be possible to increase students' awareness on the importance and value of volunteering by suggesting that volunteering should be integrated to the syllabus of relevant courses in universities. Although this research mainly examines the volunteering patterns in the SosyalBen Foundation context, this approach to volunteering will likely play an overall contributing role.

Results Regarding the Gains from Volunteering

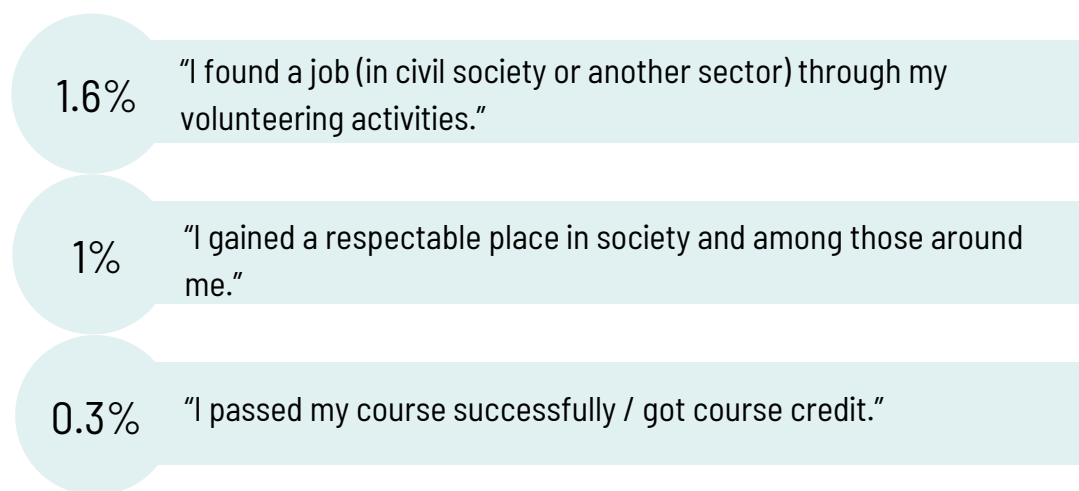
Based on the participants' responses regarding the gains from volunteering, the most preferred option is the satisfaction obtained from contributing to society without expecting anything in return (64.3%, see Figure 5), which supports the fact that volunteering is generally based on altruistic foundations in the context of this sample, as can be seen in the motivations for volunteering activities. Simultaneously, skills related to teamwork (33.6%) and professional knowledge or specialization (31.6%) are among the significant gains. Moreover, the participants stated that their self-confidence increased (29.2%) and their social circle expanded (28.6%) due to their volunteering activities.

Figure 5. The five most preferred options among the gains from volunteering



According to the responses of the participants, it is seen that “passing the course and getting course credit” (0.3%, see Figure 6) has the lowest rate when it comes to gains. Even though 58.9%⁶ of the participants agree with the statement that volunteering increases their respectability in society when presented as a separate Likert scale statement, one of the least preferred options (1%) is “I gained a respectable place in the society and among those around me”⁷ as an option of the gains of the participants from voluntary activities.

Figure 6. The three least preferred options among the gains from volunteering



Besides, the rate of those who found employment through volunteering activities was 1.6%. As underlined in the literature review section, one of the most fundamental volunteering principles is to undertake it without expecting anything in return. However, since there are various issues surrounding the job market in Turkey (unemployment related problems, inadequate levels of female employment, etc.), this can be considered as a specific case. In this regard, volunteering can be evaluated by employers as a process that contributes to the transition to employment in some sectors by acting as a buffer mechanism. In this way, it can contribute to an increasing interest in volunteering, as well as the number and potential of volunteers. This function can be adopted as a transition strategy to increase the value and importance of volunteering in society with the expansion in the number of volunteers, the visibility of volunteering, and its sustainability.

Increasing the Awareness of Young People about Volunteering

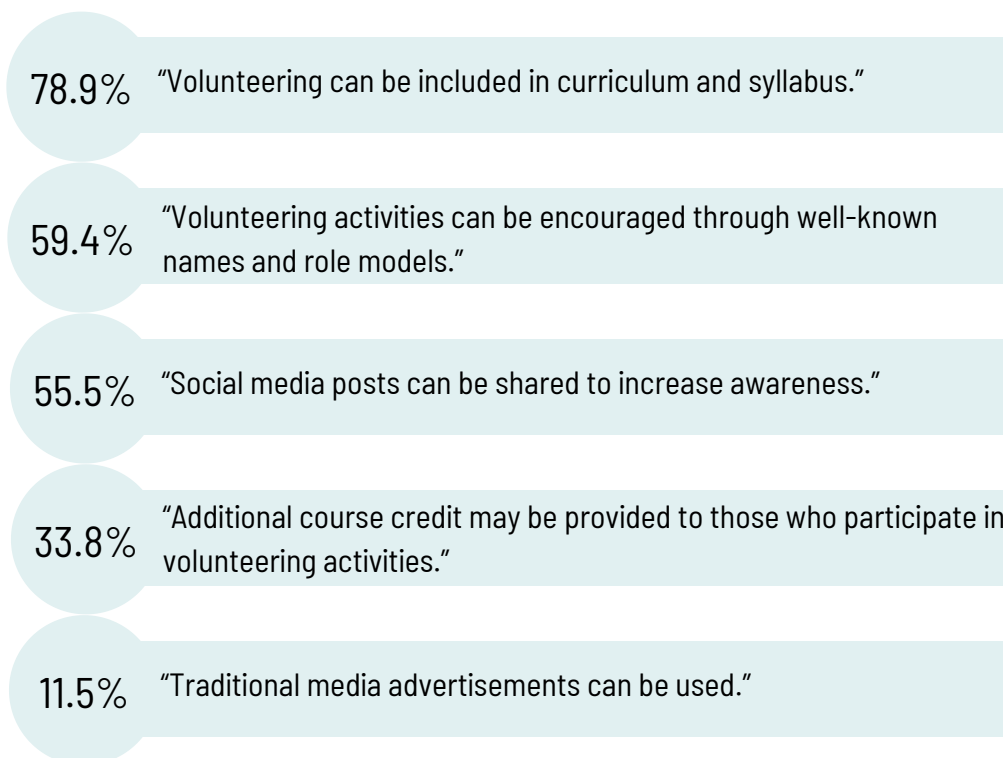
According to the participants, the most necessary step to increase the awareness of young people is to make volunteering a part of the curriculum/syllabus (78.9%, see Figure 7), supporting the results obtained regarding volunteering motivations and our related suggestions. The participants' responses showed that young people need role models to direct them towards volunteering activities (59.4%).

⁶ The proportion of participants who score 8, 9 or 10 out of 10 on this statement..

⁷ There is a limit to choose at least one and at most three options.

Thus, the role modelling of famous people, political figures, media figures, teachers, and parents for young people is an essential factor. Although the participants do not consider social media posts to be very useful in their motivation for volunteering, they think that it is crucial for raising awareness (55.5%). Considering this contradiction, how important social media posts are to raise awareness among young people and how insufficient they are in being a motivation, the importance of enriching the quality and quantity of the posts about volunteering on social media could be underlined. Also, the extensive use of social media among young people and the fact that traditional media has remained relatively in the background (Reichert, 2020; Vromen et al., 2015; Durak & Seferoğlu, 2016) coincides with the fact that the participants see social media as a more effective tool for raising awareness among young people rather than traditional media.

Figure 7. The most preferred five suggestions to increase the awareness of young people on volunteering



In our questionnaire, in addition to the closed-ended questions, there were quite interesting suggestions in the open-ended "other" option. Selected suggestions can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' suggestions to increase the awareness among young people about volunteering activities⁸

"A sense of social responsibility can be instilled in students by fitting a few hours of activities to out-of-town or in-city trips in primary and high schools."

"Non-governmental organizations should draw sustainable life scenarios."

"Official regulations can be made to regulate the rights and responsibilities of volunteers."

"It must be included in the curriculum. I found and recognized myself thanks to volunteering. I was a person with low self-esteem, I am no longer like that. I realized my contribution to society."

"A chain of volunteering can be created: 'I touched your life, you should touch someone else's life' kind of a responsibility can be created."

"From an early age, children can be taken to nursing homes regularly, meet with individuals in need of special education, and this can be normalized."

"Those who participate in volunteering activities should be reminded of how valuable they are and that they are doing a beneficial action for society via one-to-one communications. Besides, a sapling can be planted on behalf of the person who volunteers to show appreciation. Making a child happy can be further motivated."

"By providing experiences at a young age, removing prejudices and opening the door to new ideas will increase participation in volunteering activities."

"Even though the ads weigh on people's conscience, they are not strong enough to mobilize the masses. For this reason, a suitable environment and opportunities should be provided for young people to experience rather than observing volunteering."

"The probability of giving job opportunities to volunteers can be increased."

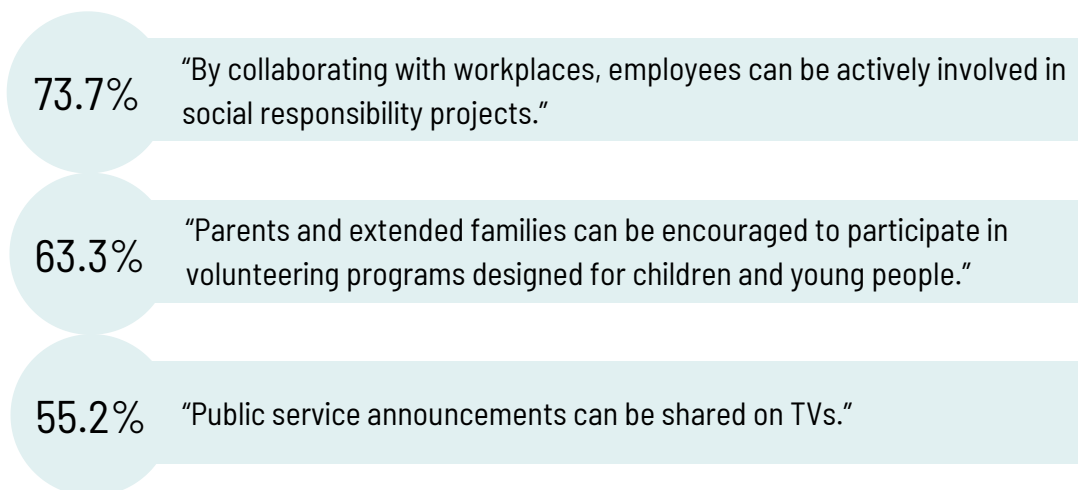


⁸ Individual statements were arranged and presented (without interfering with the content) by removing spelling mistakes and sentence fragments.

Increasing the Awareness of Middle Aged and Older Individuals about Volunteering

The importance of raising awareness for middle-aged and older individuals is considerable because the support families give to volunteering activities has a significant positive effect on volunteering satisfaction, as presented below. In this research, a considerable part of the sample stated that their families supported these activities (85.9%). Although there is no general data collected on this subject in Turkey, it is also vital that this becomes a general pattern.

Figure 8. The three most preferred suggestions to increase the awareness of middle-aged and older individuals on volunteering

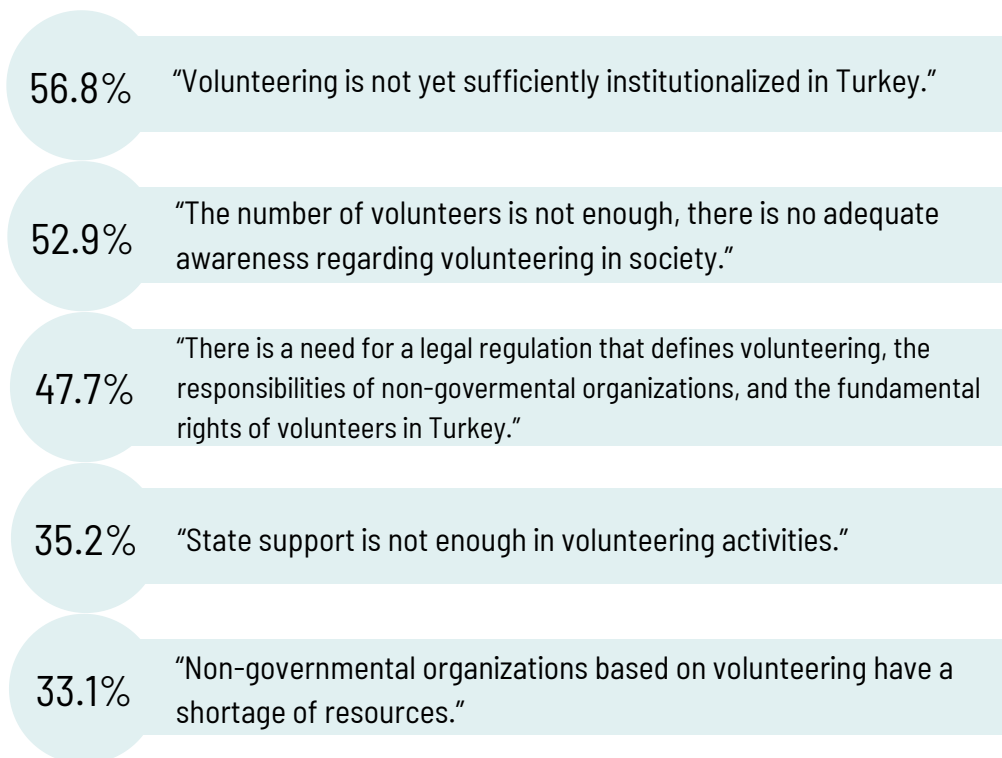


Increasing the projects to be carried out in the workplaces (73.7%, see Figure 8) has been the most preferred option in raising middle age and above individuals' awareness. While suggestions for using social media instead of traditional media to expand young people's awareness are at the forefront, considering the most preferred suggestions for middle age and above, the importance of traditional media (55.2%) stands out. When we examine the responses to raise the awareness of different age groups together, it is seen that the participants generally believe in the importance of both traditional and social media on this issue in society, as detailed in the "other" option.

The Future of Volunteering: Thoughts on the Development of Volunteerism in Turkey

When participants' views on the points that should be improved on volunteering are examined, the opinion that volunteerism is not institutionalized in Turkey (56.8% see Figure 9) become prominent. Also, as can be inferred from other results, Turkey's number of volunteers is not considered sufficient (52.9%). Various studies are needed to improve.

Figure 9. Five most preferred options regarding what needs improvement regarding volunteering



Also, participants highly preferred the options of "regulating a legal framework on volunteering" (47.7%) and the "need to increase resources" (33.1%).

The Association Between the Elements of Volunteering

Understanding the relationship between components of volunteering is crucial for reaching meaningful results and making suggestions that correspond to practice. Although this research is carried out in a context close to being a case study and hence it is not possible to generalize results at the national level in line with statistical principles, we believe that these findings will make way for comprehensive recommendations that will be beneficial regarding the improvement of volunteering in Turkey.

According to the Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficients (Spearman, 1904), there is a positive correlation between the participants' views on the importance of volunteering and their well-being. As the importance given to volunteerism increases, their life satisfaction and general happiness levels increase (see Table 2). Also, there is a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between the importance of volunteering in one's life and the impact of volunteering activities on life satisfaction and happiness (the strongest correlation was found with the latter variable). There is also a statistically significant relationship between participants' consideration of volunteering as an important part of their lives and the satisfaction and happiness they get from volunteering.

Table 2. Correlation between the views on the importance of volunteering in participants' lives and variables related to subjective well-being (Spearman correlation coefficients)

Overall Life Satisfaction (On a scale ranging from low to high). ⁹	.1861*
Overall Happiness Level (On a scale ranging from low to high). ¹⁰	.1461*
The Impact of Volunteering Activities on Life Satisfaction (On a scale ranging from low to high). ¹¹	.5224*
The Impact of Volunteering Activities on Happiness (On a scale ranging from low to high). ¹²	.5732*
Satisfaction with Volunteering (On a scale ranging from low to high). ¹³	.4598*
Happiness Derived from Volunteering (On a scale ranging from low to high). ¹⁴	.5257*
*: P value equal or below .05 (statistically significant)	

As seen in Table 3, there are statistically significant and positive correlations between the opinions about the impact of volunteering activities on the sense of responsibility and life satisfaction, happiness, satisfaction with volunteering and happiness derived from volunteering.

Table 3. The correlation between views on the impact of volunteering on gaining a sense of responsibility and variables related to subjective well-being (Spearman correlation coefficients)

The Impact of Volunteering Activities on Life Satisfaction (On a scale ranging from low to high)	.4748*
The impact of Volunteering Activities on Happiness (On a scale ranging from low to high)	.4932*
Satisfaction with Volunteering (On a scale ranging from low to high)	.4229*
Happiness Derived from Volunteering (On a scale ranging from low to high)	.4792*
*: P value equal or below .05 (statistically significant)	

⁹ Participants rated their overall life satisfaction on a scale from 0 to 100, from low to high.

¹⁰ Participants rated their overall happiness on a scale from 0 to 100, from low to high.

¹¹ Participants rated the impact of volunteering on their life satisfaction on a scale from 0 to 10, from low to high.

¹² Participants rated the effect of volunteering on their happiness level on a scale from 0 to 10, from low to high.

¹³ Participants scored their satisfaction with volunteering on a scale of 0-100, from low to high.

¹⁴ Participants scored their happiness derived from volunteering on a scale from 0 to 100, from low to high.

Table 4 shows a statistically significant and positive correlation between individuals' opinions about the impact of volunteering activities on their social lives and all the components underlined in Table 3.

Table 4. Correlation between views on the impact of volunteering on social life and variables related to subjective well-being (Spearman correlation coefficients)

The Impact of Volunteering Activities on Life Satisfaction (On a scale ranging from low to high)	.4842*
The Impact of Volunteering Activities on Happiness (On a scale ranging from low to high)	.5142*
Satisfaction with Volunteering (On a scale ranging from low to high)	.4711*
Happiness Derived from Volunteering (On a scale ranging from low to high)	.4864*
*: P value equal or below .05 (statistically significant)	

It is seen that the views on the impact of volunteering activities on social life have a strong relationship with the impact of volunteering activities on happiness. These findings indicate that well-being levels increase as the participants' views on the impact of volunteering on their social lives progress positively, and vice versa: they also decrease together as there is a positive correlation.

The Effect of The Related Components on Satisfaction with Volunteering

It is important to understand the components that affect satisfaction with volunteering for individuals who are volunteers to achieve sustainability and expansion of volunteering and increasing motivation for associated activities (Binder & Freytag, 2013; Boz & Palaz, 2007). In this context, satisfaction with volunteering is predicted using simple linear regression models, as detailed below. The independent variables in individual models are as follows: being content with current volunteering conditions¹⁵, views on respectability gained from volunteering¹⁶, family support for volunteering activities¹⁷, total time in volunteering activities¹⁸ and the views on the sense of responsibility gained from volunteering.¹⁹

¹⁵ Participants rated their agreement with the statement "I am content with the current volunteering conditions" on a scale of 1-10, from low to high. This independent variable is used by transforming it into a dummy variable comprising 3 categories.

¹⁶ Participants rated their agreement with the statement "Volunteering increases my respectability in society" on a scale of 1-10, from low to high. This independent variable is used by transforming it into a dummy variable comprising 3 categories.

¹⁷ Participants rated their agreement with the statement "My family supports my volunteering activities" on a scale of 1-10, from low to high. This independent variable is used by transforming it into a dummy variable comprising 3 categories.

¹⁸ Participants have indicated how long they have been in volunteering activities in total by choosing one of the options: "Less than 1 year", "More than 1 year less than 3 years", "More than 3 years less than 5 years," or "5 years and more".

¹⁹ Participants rated their agreement with the statement "Volunteering has given me a sense of responsibility" on a scale of 1-10, from low to high. This independent variable is used by transforming it into a dummy variable comprising 3 categories.

According to the results, satisfaction with volunteering is statistically significantly higher by 12.59 points for those who state that they are content with volunteering conditions than those who are not (see Table 5). The first simple linear regression model revealed that being content with volunteering conditions could statistically significantly predict satisfaction obtained from volunteering. Also, being content with volunteering conditions explains 6%²⁰ of the variability in satisfaction with volunteering. Based on this finding, it is seen that improving volunteers' conditions can expand the sustainability of volunteering, which was supported by the literature. When we look into the participants' suggestions on increasing the awareness among young people about volunteering, it can also be underlined here that legal regulations for the institutionalization of volunteering and the improvement of its conditions are expected to increase satisfaction with volunteering.

Table 5. Simple linear regression model with the dependent variable "satisfaction with volunteering" and the independent variable "opinions about satisfaction with current volunteering conditions"

"I am satisfied with the current volunteering conditions." <i>(Reference Category: I disagree)</i>	
Neither agree nor disagree	6.19 (3.30)
I agree	12.59 (3.23)**
Constant	78.70 (3.07)***
R ² (R Square)	0.0649
Number of Observations (N)	383

Compared to those who argue that volunteering does not increase their respectability in society, satisfaction with volunteering for those who expressed their opinions as "neither agree nor disagree" is 10.68 points higher, statistically significantly (see Table 6). Also, for those who agree that volunteering increases their respectability in society, their satisfaction with volunteering is statistically significantly higher by 19.07 points relative to those who disagree. It has been determined that the views on respectability in society gained as a result of volunteering can statistically significantly predict satisfaction with volunteering. The variable concerning the views on the impact of volunteering on respectability in society explains 12% of the variability in satisfaction with volunteering. As stated when discussing the gains obtained from volunteering, various efforts are needed to increase the awareness regarding the importance of volunteering in society. Strengthening the position of volunteering in society, improvement of society's perspective on volunteering, and the increase in the satisfaction from volunteering have a vital role in expanding the number of volunteers and sustainability of volunteering.

²⁰ The rates of the explained variability are the Adjusted R-Squared values.

Table 6. Simple linear regression model with the dependent variable "satisfaction with volunteering" and the independent variable "views on the impact of volunteering on respectability in society"

"Engaging in volunteer activities increases my respectability in society." <i>(Reference Category: I disagree)</i>	
Neither agree nor disagree	10.68 (3.34)**
I agree	19.07 (3.25)***
Constant	73 (3.11)***
R ² (R Square)	0.1246
Number of Observations (N)	384

The satisfaction with volunteering for those, whose families support their volunteering activities, is 13.99 points higher than those whose families are now showing support (see Table 7). Based on the simple linear regression analysis, it was determined that the support given to volunteering activities by the family could statistically significantly predict satisfaction with volunteering. It was found that the level of family support explains 8.6% of the variability in satisfaction with volunteering. It is important to inform parents about volunteering and encourage them to support their children's voluntary activities in this context.

Table 7. Simple linear regression model with the dependent variable "satisfaction with volunteering" and the independent variable "views on family support for volunteering activities"

"My family supports my volunteering activities." <i>(Reference Category: I disagree)</i>	
Neither agree nor disagree	2.12 (5.48)
I agree	13.99 (5.20)**
Constant	76.12 (5.13)***
R ² (R Square)	0.0913
Number of Observations (N)	384

Satisfaction with volunteering for those who have been undertaking volunteering activities for more than one year and less than three years is 4.26 points higher relative to those who have been volunteering for less than one year, statistically significantly (see Table 8). Similarly, those who have been volunteering for more than three years and less than five years have 5.32 points higher satisfaction with volunteering compared to those involved in volunteering for less than one year. Finally, the estimated satisfaction with volunteering for those who have been undertaking volunteering activities for five years or more is 7.61 points higher than those who have been volunteering for less than one year. The total duration of volunteering can statistically significantly predict satisfaction with volunteering. In addition, the total time of volunteering explains 1.8% of the variation in satisfaction with volunteering. The fact that rising durations of volunteering increases the satisfaction with volunteering reveals that volunteering is understood and internalized in the process, and this also refers to the importance of sustainability of volunteering.

Table 8. Simple linear regression model with "satisfaction with volunteering" as the dependent variable and "since when one has been volunteering" as the independent variable

Since when one has been volunteering	
<i>(Reference Category: Less than 1 year)</i>	
More than 1 year less than 3 years	4.26 (1.86)*
More than 3 years less than 5 years	5.32 (2.30)*
5 years and above	7.61 (2.87)**
Constant	84.44 (1.46)***
R ² (R Square)	0.0196
Number of Observations (N)	384



As shown in Table 9, satisfaction with volunteering for people who stated that they gained a sense of responsibility through volunteering is statistically significantly higher than those who stated that they did not do so, by 16.93 points.

Table 9. Simple linear regression model with the dependent variable "satisfaction with volunteering" and the independent variable "views on the sense of responsibility provided by volunteering"

"Engaging in volunteer activities gave me a sense of responsibility." <i>(Reference Category: I disagree)</i>	
Neither agree nor disagree	3.89 (7.73)
I agree	16.93 (7.37)*
Constant	72.5 (7.33)***
R ² (R Square)	0.0737
Number of Observations (N)	384

The simple linear regression model revealed that the sense of responsibility gained from volunteering activities could statistically significantly predict satisfaction with volunteering. The awareness of responsibility gained through volunteering activities explains 6.9% of the variation in satisfaction with volunteering.

Although we see that the extent to which the independent variables predict the variability in satisfaction with volunteering is relatively weak, it has been determined that the independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable in individual models.



Conclusion

This report led us to some suggestions related to the findings as a result of the primary data most of which were collected from people who are currently volunteering or have volunteered before within the SosyalBen Foundation. As indicated in detail in the introduction, although the results cannot be generalized within the framework of the data collection method, we believe that the practical implementation of the recommendations to be expressed in this section in light of the results will contribute to the development of volunteering in our country. The primary purpose of this study is raising awareness regarding the importance of volunteering and volunteerism in Turkey, increasing the motivation and well-being of volunteers, in this way contributing to the steps to be taken to increase the volunteer role models.

We have determined the most prominent motivation for volunteering for the participants in the sample as philosophy of life and helping others. These altruistic motivations also overlap with the definitions in the existing literature regarding the nature of volunteering. Academic purposes (receiving a reference letter, raising the grade, obtaining information concerning the field, etc.) constitute one of the least selected motivations. Concordantly, including volunteering activities to the education curriculum has been the most preferred response towards increasing awareness of youth concerning volunteering. At this point, we have underlined the importance of including readings and related contents on volunteering to the course syllabus. However, it should be noted that, as some of our respondents stated in the open-ended "other" option, the concepts of rewarding does not seem compatible with the nature of volunteering and the expected general motivation. Parallel to this, the least preferred option regarding the gains from volunteering was to obtain course credits. In this context, without the requirement of compulsory credit or grades, including articles which cover research on volunteering to the reading lists of courses, supporting and promoting student clubs in universities can be listed as potential actions. As stated in the section on motivation for volunteering, it is expected that the integration of resources that comprise content on volunteering into related syllabi will have an essential role in contributing to increased interest and knowledge on the subject. In addition to that as a part of the course, volunteering activities can be carried out during the semester with the encouragement of faculty members in relevant departments to raise awareness, without providing anything in return.

When we consider the gains from volunteering, the spiritual satisfaction of contributing to society has been the most preferred option which is compatible with the general definition of volunteering. However, one of the least preferred options was helping to find a job. Even though volunteering is based on an altruistic foundation, employment can be considered as a privileged field in which volunteering, volunteers, and the labor market can benefit. The possibility of individuals' incorporation to the job market via establishing networks (this was preferred as a motivation for volunteering with a rate of 15.4% and as a gain with 28.6%) as a result of acquiring skills and knowledge about future profession and specialization (this was the third most preferred option among the gains from volunteering with 31.2%) could increase the interest and motivation towards volunteering activities.

The options that are most preferred by the respondents regarding the future of volunteering have been institutionalization, raising awareness of volunteering and the number of volunteers, and the implementation of relevant legal regulations. At this point, the need for legal regulations and creating a legal framework with state support concerning volunteering has come to the forefront.

In the analysis, the most significant correlation was observed between the effects of volunteering activities on general happiness levels of individuals and the impact of volunteering on obtaining a sense of responsibility.

The participants' level of agreement that volunteering increases their sense of responsibility is directly proportional to the positive impact of these activities on their happiness. In this respect, analyzing the relationship between increasing the sense of responsibility of individuals as a result of volunteering and their happiness from volunteering activities from a broad perspective through causality analysis will provide exciting results in future studies.

Being satisfied with the current volunteering conditions, believing that volunteering increases reputation and sense of responsibility, and increasing total volunteering time enhances satisfaction gained from volunteering significantly. Besides, the family support to volunteering increases the satisfaction gained from volunteering. Once again, this result requires us to underline the suggestions that respondents preferred for increasing the awareness of middle-aged and older individuals regarding volunteering: the most preferred option was to cooperate with workplaces to guide them take an active role in social responsibility projects. Therefore, it can be recommended that workplaces play a supportive and encouraging role in this regard. The fact that the second most preferred option is being encouragement of parents to their children's participation to volunteering activities, is a significant result with considering the importance of family support regarding volunteering.

Finally, especially in the context of gender, the literature presents volunteering as a neutral element (Windsor et al., 2008; Greenfield & Marks, 2004). Within this research framework, it has understood that gender and age do not have a statistically significant effect on satisfaction from volunteering. There may be statistical based reasons for that (most of the sample is gathered within a specific age range, a high proportion of female participants), still, in any case, we think that it is crucial to primarily examine the patterns of participation in volunteering in the context of gender (in)equality in the following studies.

Volunteering is essential to the development of societies. Ziersch & Baum, 2004; Aydınligil, 2013). However, the benefits of volunteering are not limited to its contribution to society (Baker et al., 2005; Luoh & Herzog, 2002); as our research states that it is also essential for individuals' life satisfaction and happiness levels. We believe that volunteering will have a stronger and more prominent place in our country, together with its increasing importance and its bright future, combined with the evaluation of volunteering in a legal framework, its spread, and raising awareness of volunteering.



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SOSYALBEN FOUNDATION VOLUNTEERING RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by: Aslı E. Mert, Berra Karayel, Doğa Dilbilmez, İlayda Eskitaşçioğlu

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