



## Who Is Most Likely to Volunteer with Refugees?

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Socio-Structural Determinants in Volunteering for Humanitarian Organizations: A Resource-Based Approach" helps volunteer coordinators, advocacy leaders, and volunteer support centers understand the characteristics of individuals most likely to engage in volunteer activities for integration.

The authors distinguish between 'activist,' 'interest,' and 'leisure' organizations; each of these types attracts potential volunteers with somewhat different characteristics.

The most typical volunteer engaged in humanitarian organizations (in the Netherlands, before Covid-19) is a woman who is highly educated and healthy. She may not necessarily be wealthy and not necessarily strongly rooted in the community; in fact, she could come from a non-Dutch background. She likely attends religious services and highbrow cultural events, providing valuable insights for planning volunteer recruitment initiatives.

[#Volunteers](#) [#Refugees](#) [#HumanitarianOrganizations](#) [#Activism](#) [#Recruitment](#)

- **A resource-based approach** is the theory that explains why certain types of individuals are more inclined to volunteer than others. The decision to volunteer, or not, does not occur by chance; it is influenced by specific characteristics that each person possesses to varying degrees, which trigger and sustain their willingness to engage in voluntary activities. These individual resources are categorized as various **forms of personal capital** and determine the extent to which individuals are qualified to volunteer.
- **Human capital** is viewed as the essential entry requirement for participation in the volunteering labour market. This includes factors such as **education, income, and health**. The authors hypothesize that a higher level of education, increased income, and better health all motivate individuals to opt for volunteering in humanitarian organizations, rather than in other types of associations.
- **Cultural capital** encompasses religiosity and cultural participation. Those who participate in **religious activities** are often considered more likely to volunteer. The authors also consider the intimate dimension of **prayer**. A noteworthy addition to the typical predictors is engagement in **highbrow cultural consumption**. The authors predict that individuals who attend theatres and read books will be more inclined to participate in humanitarian organizations.
- **Social capital** revolves around relationships. The authors predict that individuals with more **social ties** are exposed to greater incentives to engage in volunteer activities. The indicators include **informal social interactions**, like visiting friends, and the number of children in the household, as parenting is an inducement for socialization.

## Background

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## Context



# ERNOP Research Note

Academic articles on philanthropy through a practitioner lens

## Take aways & Learnings



- **Different types of associations attract volunteers with somewhat different characteristics** – Segmenting the analyses by associational typology – activist, interest and leisure (and other) permits to refine our understanding of volunteers, and our people-raising strategies.
- **High cultural capital is a strong predictor of volunteering in humanitarian organizations** – Highbrow cultural consumption is associated not only with humanitarian but also with interest and leisure associations. This provides a clear suggestion to volunteer support centres and to associations looking for volunteers on how to arrange and where to stage the promotion initiatives.
- **Resources of education and health enable people to engage in demanding volunteering settings such as humanitarian associations** – The same holds true for other value-based initiatives, such as environmental or advocacy organizations of the activist family.
- **Religious participation is conducive to volunteering for humanitarian causes** – But praying alone has no influence.
- **People who have friends and have children are more likely to volunteer in leisure organizations** – This confirms that bonding social capital spreads out much more easily than the bridging kind, which occurs when we are confronted with diversity.

Personal capitals of volunteers: determinants of engagement		ACTIVIST	INTEREST	LEISURE
HUMAN	• Educational level	Green	Light Green	White
	• Income	White	White	White
	• Subjective health	Green	White	Light Green
CULTURAL	• Attendance of religious gatherings	Green	White	White
	• Prayer	White	White	White
	• Highbrow cultural consumption	Green	Green	Green
SOCIAL	• Informal social interaction	White	White	Green
	• Number of children in the household	White	White	Green
		White	White	Green

Indicators (by forms of capital): Intensity of the likelihood to volunteer, by type of association

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