



7.4 Voluntary work in cultural mediation

According to the → [Swiss Federal Statistical Office](#), approximately 33% of the Swiss population engaged in volunteer work in 2010. In the ranking of volunteer causes, cultural institutions came in second, accounting for almost 10% of all voluntary service (sports headed the list). Statistical Office data show that volunteers in cultural institutions tend to be more highly educated and correspondingly have higher incomes. In this respect they are less heterogeneous as a group than volunteers in other spheres, such as sports or the social sphere. This is a function of the fact that volunteers see public appreciation and the cultivation of networks, for instance, as beneficial. In the cultural arena, social and symbolic benefits of this kind can be used and generated only by those – few – individuals who have learned to perceive the arts in this way. By contrast, appreciation of sports as a social good is found at all levels of society to a greater degree.

A brochure published in 2008 by the German Museums Association entitled "Civic engagement in the museum" stresses that volunteers should not be a substitute for full-time staff. Instead, volunteer workers should "... support the museum's activities, round out the work of the full-time employees and bring new impulses into the museum" (→ [Deutscher Museumsbund 2008](#)). The latter is made less likely by the fact that institutions seldom have organizational structures in place which would systematically take up the experiences and ideas of voluntary workers and allow them to have an impact, in the sense of renewal or change. In 2010, the Swiss volunteer association → [BENEVOL](#) published a set of standards for working with volunteers which can serve as guidelines for cultural institutions and others.

→ [Federal Statistical Office](#) <http://www.freiwilligenmonitor.ch/static/files/service/downloads/SAKE-2010.pdf> [1.5.2012]; see Resource Pool MFE070403.pdf

→ [Deutscher Museumsbund 2008](#) http://www.museumsbund.de/fileadmin/geschaefts/dokumente/Leitfaeden_und_anderes/BEIM_Broschuere_2008.pdf [1.5.2012]; see Resource Pool MFE070401.pdf

→ [BENEVOL](#) http://www.benevol.ch/fileadmin/pdf/BENEVOL_Standards_Freiwilligenarbeit_2011.pdf [1.5.2012]; see Resource Pool MFE070402.pdf