

# Youth Volunteers in Glace Bay and Kings County, Nova Scotia

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More than 500 youth aged 15 to 24 in two communities in Nova Scotia were surveyed in 2001 about their volunteer activities and attitudes to volunteering.<sup>1</sup> The survey was done as part of the Community Genuine Progress Index.<sup>2</sup> This fact sheet reports on the activities and attitudes of youth who volunteered formally (i.e., through an organization) in Kings County, an economically prosperous region in Nova Scotia, and Glace Bay, an area that recently experienced an economic downturn.

## Youth participation in formal volunteering

Youth in Kings County volunteer at a rate that is higher than the national and provincial average and give more hours per year on average. Whereas 29% of Canadian youth and 31% of Nova Scotia youth volunteered in 2000<sup>3</sup>, 44% of youth in Kings County volunteered. Provincially and nationally, youth volunteered an average of 130 hours per year. In Kings County, they volunteered an average of 132 hours. The youth volunteer rate and the number of hours volunteered per year were lower than the provincial and national average in Glace Bay, where only 24% of youth volunteered and contributed an average of only 59 hours per year.

## Youth participation in informal volunteering

In Kings County, only half as many youth (22%) participated in informal volunteering (e.g., helping neighbours, family, etc.) than participated in formal volunteering (44%). The trend was reversed in Glace Bay, where nearly twice as many youth (46%) volunteered informally than volunteered formally (24%). Nationally, there are no figures for informal youth volunteering but 77% of Canadians reported they informally volunteered in the NSGVP survey in 2000.<sup>4</sup>

## Types of organizations supported by youth volunteers

In Kings County, the three most popular types of organization for which youth volunteered were sports and recreation (37%), education (25%), and social services (20%). In Glace Bay, youth were most likely to volunteer in sports and recreation organizations (46%), youth development organizations (32%), and education organizations (27%).

## Gender differences in types of organizations supported

In Glace Bay, male youth were most likely to be involved in sports and recreation (83%), whereas in Kings County, female youth were the most likely to be involved with this type of organization (45%).

1 The survey sample included 290 youth in Kings County and 258 youth in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia. Data were weighted to reproduce the age and sex distribution from the 2001 census for both communities.

2 The survey was supported by Statistics Canada and other groups such as the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, Cape Breton County Economic Development Agency, district health authorities, and community health boards.

3 Canadian Centre for Philanthropy. (2003). *Who are Nova Scotia's Volunteers?* Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy. [http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca/pdf/factsheets/Volunteers/Who\\_are\\_Nova\\_Scotias\\_Volunteers.pdf](http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca/pdf/factsheets/Volunteers/Who_are_Nova_Scotias_Volunteers.pdf)

4 Hall, M., McKeown, L., & Roberts, K. (2001). *Caring Canadians, involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.

## Spirituality and volunteerism among youth

Youth volunteers tend to be more spiritual than do non-volunteers. Youth volunteers in Glace Bay tended to be more spiritual than their Kings County peers. Moreover, nearly half (49%) of youth volunteers in Glace Bay reported that they volunteered to fulfill religious obligations, compared to less than one quarter (24%) of youth volunteers in Kings County. Those religious obligations were fulfilled both through volunteering for religious and non-religious activities.

In Glace Bay, 16% of youth volunteering for a religious organization volunteered with a church whereas in Kings County only 14% did.

In Glace Bay, only 35% of youth volunteering through their church donated their volunteer time to religious organizations associated with the church, whereas in Kings County 61% did so. The other youth volunteering through their churches in both communities donated their volunteer time to non-religious organizations (e.g. social services, education)

