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Canadian Knowledge Hub

for Giving and Volunteering

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Volunteering Patterns Among Racialized Canadians

From the 2023
General Social Survey on Giving,
Volunteering and Participating (GSS-
GVP)

Funded by the Government
of Canada's Social Development
Partnerships Program

Canada

Report highlights and insights from the StatsCan
Report:
*The diverse volunteering contributions of racialized
Canadians (2025)*
by Maire Sinha and Christy Lenhardt



Volunteering among racialized Canadians

- 70% participated in volunteering.
- 936 million volunteer hours were contributed.
- Informal volunteering was more common than formal participation.
- Participation patterns varied by place of birth.
- Differences remain in board and decision-making roles.

For the first time, this survey enables national analysis of volunteering patterns across racialized population groups.

Understanding how participation varies helps strengthen recruitment, retention, and representation across Canada's volunteer systems.

70%

of racialized Canadians
volunteered in the past 12
months

936 million volunteer hours
145 hours per volunteer* annually



*corrected from previous version

For racialized Canadians, volunteering is more often direct help to people or community-based action than volunteering through an organization.

64%

Participated in Informal Volunteering

29%

Participated in Formal Volunteering



33%

Participated in both

Volunteering rates differ across racialized Canadians depending on whether they were born in Canada or immigrated.

79%

Canadian-born racialized Canadians

67%

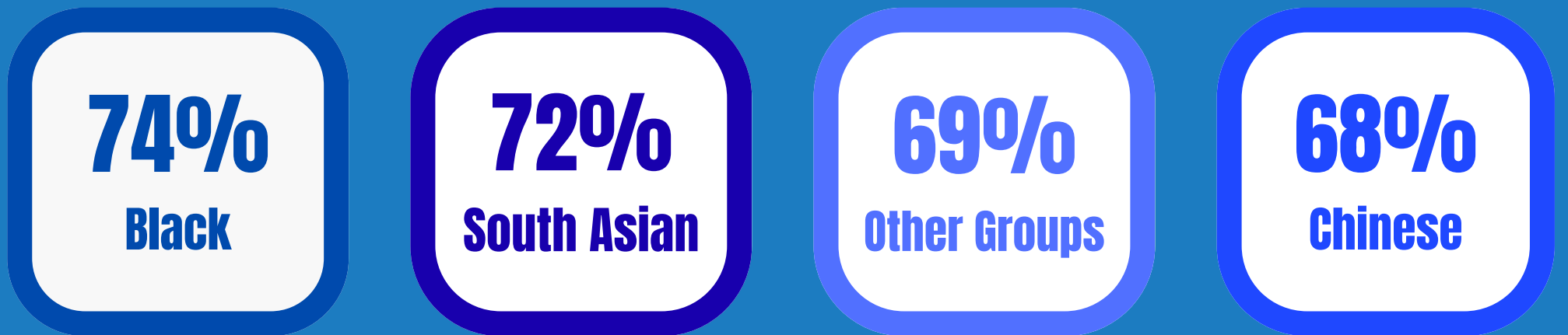
Racialized immigrants

74%

Canadian-born non-racialized Canadians



Volunteering rates vary across racialized population groups



While participation levels were similar, average annual hours of formal volunteering varied.



Includes both formal and informal volunteering.

Formal volunteering among racialized Canadians tends to be concentrated in community-serving sectors

25% Religious Organizations

24% Social Services

15% Education and Research

12% Sports and Recreation



An equity gap in governance

20%

**Racialized volunteers
Serve on boards or
committees**

32%

**Non-racialized volunteers
Serve on boards or
committees**

Racialized volunteers were less likely than non-racialized volunteers to serve in decision-making roles such as board membership.

Among volunteers who participated formally.



Shared motivations, distinct priorities

Motivations more commonly reported by racialized volunteers

52%

Explore Strengths

52%

Network or Meet People

35%

Improve Job Opportunities



Racialized volunteers were more likely to report motivations tied to skills development and employment pathways.

Barriers to formal volunteering participation

76%

Lack of Time

41%

Did not know how to get involved

Racialized Canadians were more likely than non-racialized Canadians to report time constraints and difficulty finding opportunities.

56%

Unable to make a long-term commitment

Among racialized Canadians who did not volunteer formally.

Informal volunteering is widespread

Most common informal activities:

65%

**Housework or
maintenance**

51%

**Shopping or
transportation**

43%

**Health-related
care**

How informal volunteering happens:

62%

Helped someone directly

21%

Improved the community

Informal volunteering often takes the form of everyday care and practical support.

