



Factsheet – Statistical activity and published results

Unpaid Work (the module in the Swiss Labour Force Survey SLFS)

Description

The statistics on unpaid work cover domestic and family work as well as voluntary activities for organisations, associations and public institutions, and informal help given to relatives and friends. Their aim is to record both paid and unpaid working hours. As a complement to the national accounts, this makes it possible to estimate the ratio between the value added by paid work and that of unpaid work. The relatively wide spectrum of the SLFS enables data to be disaggregated in many different ways.

Available since:
1997

Published results:

Main responsibility for domestic tasks, time spent on domestic and family work by sex, age, family situation and labour market status (reference day), participation in formal voluntary work by type of organization, participation in informal work by type of activity, time spent on formal and informal voluntary work by sex, age and family situation (4 last weeks)

Methodology

Applied methodology:

The data is collected every three to four years as part of the Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS) in the "Unpaid work" module. The question module, which lasts around 5 minutes, records the different types of unpaid activities and the time spent on each. 2/3 of the basic SLFS sampling responded to the module. Unpaid work is defined as productive work that is not remunerated, but could in theory be provided by a third party in return for payment (third party criterion). The questions on domestic and family work refer to a given day (yesterday or the day before), while those on voluntary work refer to the last 4 weeks.

Sample size for the "Unpaid work" module:

1997 and 2000: around 16,000 interviews

2004 and 2007: around 50,000 interviews

2010, 2013, 2016 and 2020: around 25,000 interviews

Variables used:

- Main responsibility for domestic tasks
- Main responsibility for children
- Time spent on domestic workload on the reference day (8 activities)
- Time spent on family workload on the reference day (4 activities)
- Participation in formal voluntary work: type of organisation and responsibility in the organisation
- Time spent for formal volunteering activities per organisation (maximum 3 organisations) in the last 4 weeks
- Involvement in unpaid activities for people outside the household: type of activity, relationship to the person helped and main reason for the activities
- Time spent on unpaid activities for people outside the household (maximum 3 activities for maximum 3 people/households) in the last 4 weeks

Date/period of survey:

1997, 2000, 2004 and 2007: 2nd quarter (April to June)
2010, 2013, 2016, 2020 and 2024: all year round

Publication frequency:
Year following the survey

Degree of regionalisation:
Switzerland and main regions (since 2002)

Policy on revisions

- 2023: revision of the questionnaire due to the transition from a telephone survey to a multi-mode survey (internet/telephone survey) in order to improve the response rate and the coverage rate
 - 2017: Revision of SLFS weighting from 2010 to 2016, integration of social insurance data in processing non-response and in the calibration process in order to increase statistical accuracy
 - 2016: deletion of questions on uptake of external childcare and questionnaire revised on informal voluntary work on behalf of the Federal Council
 - 2010: change of system to comply with EU regulation 557/1998, the SLFS is carried out over the whole calendar year (previously in the 2nd quarter)
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Legal bases

Ordinance of 30 April 2025 on Federal Statistics

Organisation

Federal Statistical Office (FSO) with the help of YouGov Switzerland (formerly LINK)
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