

CO4.1: Participation in and membership of groups and organisations for young adults

Definitions and methodology

This indicator presents information on young adult's participation in and membership of groups and organisations through two main measures:

- *Proportion (%) of young people (18- to 29-year-olds) who are members (active or inactive) of organisations, by type of group*
- *Proportion of young people (18- to 29-year-olds) affiliated to a church or religious organisation or a trade union, by type of affiliation*

In both cases, data are taken from the World Values Survey (WVS) Wave 7 (2017-2020), which asked respondents whether they belonged to groups or organisations of a particular type and whether they considered themselves to be an “active” or “passive” member of these groups. The WVS categorises groups and organisations into different categories: groups based on religious affiliation; sports and recreational organisation; art, music or educational organisations; trade unions, political parties; humanitarian or charitable organisations; environmental organisations; and other types of organisations, including advocacy groups with specific causes.

Key findings

There are considerable differences across the covered Asia/Pacific countries in the groups and organisations to which young people belong (Table CO4.1.A). Churches, religious organisations, sports and recreational organisations are generally the most popular types of groups or organisations for young people, but not in all of the covered countries. In Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, around 50-65% of young people aged 18-29 report that they are a member (either active or inactive) of a church or religious organisation, but this is only around 10% in Japan and Viet Nam, and 4% in China. Similarly, in China, Japan and Korea about 10-20% of young people aged 18-29 report that they are a member of a sports or recreational organisation, and art, music or educational organisation. In Australia, Mongolia and Thailand, this rises to as high as 40-50%, but in Viet Nam below 10% of young people report that they are a member of these organisations. Membership of most other types of group or organisation is generally uncommon, but there are exceptions. For example, in Malaysia, Mongolia and Thailand, around 30% of young people report that they are a member of a trade union or a political party.

Not all young people who are members of groups or organisations actively participate in the organisation. Table CO4.1.B shows the proportion of young people who are members of churches and trade unions by active or passive membership status. Across the covered Asia/Pacific countries, *active* participation in both types of organisation tends to be much less frequent than general membership. In Australia, for example, only about 12% of those young people who report to be a member of a church or religious organisation and 6% of young people who report they are a member of a trade union also state that they are active members of these groups. In China, where general membership of both types of organisation is already uncommon, active membership is extremely rare – only 1% of young

Other relevant indicators: CO3.1 Educational attainment by gender; CO4.2 Participation rates of first-time voters

people aged 18-29 in China report they are active members of churches, religious organisations or trade unions.

Table CO4.1.A. Proportion (%) of young people (18- to 29-year-olds) who are members (active or inactive) of organisations by type of group, 2020 or latest
 Men and women age 18 to 29

	Year	Church or religious organisation	Sports and recreational organisation	Art, music or educational organisation	Trade unions	Political party	Humanitarian or Charitable organisation	Environmental organisation	Other groups
Australia	2018	32.4	42.4	44.7	17	8.4	30.5	13.7	5.6
China	2018	4.1	10.5	11.6	6.4	15.4	3.9	4	1.3
Indonesia	2018	64.1	43	34.4	17.4	9.1	37.6	36.8	10.8
Japan	2019	8.7	13.2	4.4	14.6	0.7	-	1.5	6.5
Korea	2018	15.4	20.6	14.2	4.4	2.4	4.4	4.8	9.3
Malaysia	2018	48.2	43.2	36.3	37.2	27.2	35.3	32.2	10
Mongolia	2020	35.4	51.5	45.7	32.4	34.9	34.5	32.6	25.8
New Zealand	2019	33.3	44.5	25.3	14.2	9.5	22.2	25.9	19
Singapore	2020	41.3	25.8	26.5	7.6	4.8	17.4	7.2	0.4
Thailand	2018	50.3	44.5	45.6	29.8	34	29.3	30.4	34
Viet Nam	2020	12.2	9.8	6	3.5	2.7	8.7	2.5	6

Sources: [World Values Survey Wave 7: 2017-2020](#)

Table CO4.1.B. Proportion of young people (18- to 29-year-olds) affiliated to a church or religious organisation or a trade union, by type of affiliation, 2020 or latest
 Men and women age 18 to 29

	Year	Affiliation to church or religious organisation			Trade union membership		
		Total	Active	Passive	Total	Active	Passive
Australia	2018	32.4	11.5	20.9	17	6.1	10.9
China	2018	4.1	1.3	2.8	6.4	1	5.4
Indonesia	2018	64.1	38.3	25.8	17.4	7.5	9.9
Japan	2019	8.7	0.7	8	14.6	5.1	9.5
Korea	2018	15.4	6.9	8.5	4.4	2.8	1.6
Malaysia	2018	48.2	22.7	25.5	37.2	13.6	23.6
Mongolia	2020	35.4	10.8	24.6	32.4	8.7	23.7
New Zealand	2019	33.3	20.6	12.7	14.2	6.3	7.9
Singapore	2020	41.3	16.2	25.1	7.6	1.7	5.9
Thailand	2018	50.3	33	17.3	29.8	11	18.8
Viet Nam	2020	12.2	8.7	3.5	3.5	2.4	1.1

Sources: [World Values Survey Wave 7: 2017-2020](#)

Comparability and data issues

All the data used in the indicator are taken from the World Values Survey (WVS) Wave 7 (2017-2020). The World Values Survey (WVS) is a worldwide network of representative national surveys carried out in almost 100 countries covering almost 90 percent of the world's population. A common questionnaire is used across countries. Seven waves of surveys have been released from 1981 to 2021, with the latest (Wave 7) carried out over the 2017/2020 period. Sample sizes do vary somewhat across the covered Asia/Pacific countries, from around 1000 in New Zealand, and 1200 in Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam to approximately 2000 in Australia and Singapore, 3000 in China and close to 3200 in Indonesia. For more detail on the methods used by the World Values Survey, see the documentation [available here](#) on the WVS website.

Sources and further reading: OECD (2019), Society at a Glance 2019: OECD Social Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/soc_glance-2019-en; World Values Survey, <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>;