The largest-ever survey of voluntary nonprofit organisations was conducted by the Centre for Nonprofit Management in 2005. Questionnaires were sent to over 24,000 organisations, and responses were received from over 4,000 organisations. This survey has given us the first glimpse of the potential size of the voluntary or nonprofit sector in the Republic of Ireland.

The majority of organisations were young and half had only been established since the mid-1980s. Over one-quarter of these organisations were based in Dublin but significant numbers were also reported in other counties, particularly in Cork, Galway, Limerick and Kerry. Organisations engaged in a wide variety of activities and varied from residents’ associations to community development groups, from primary schools to sports clubs, international NGOs to Tidy Towns’ organisations. Figure 1 (below) shows that the five largest fields of activity were development and housing, education and research, sports and recreation, social services and arts, culture and heritage.

![Figure 1: Field of Activity](image-url)
Over 11.7 million individuals and 89,000 organisations were said to benefit from the activities of these nonprofit and voluntary organisations, which, given the population of Ireland, would suggest that individuals are benefiting from the activities of several organisations. Furthermore, there is, obviously, quite a degree of networking amongst nonprofit and voluntary organisations, themselves. Beneficiaries included children, adults, children, youths, families, women, older people and voluntary and community organisations. Growing formalisation was seen to be occurring amongst these organisations as 41 per cent had CHY numbers and one-third were incorporated as companies limited by guarantee.

**Organisational and Sector Resources**

The total income reported by 3,473 organisations was €2.564bn, but half of these organisations had incomes of €40,000, and 30 per cent reported incomes of €10,000 or less (see Table 2). This suggests that much of the income may be concentrated in a small subset of very large organisations. Indeed, ten per cent of the responding organisations were in receipt of 87 per cent of this total income.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deciles</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>80 per cent</td>
<td>287,988</td>
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<tr>
<td>90 per cent</td>
<td>771,441</td>
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</table>

*Table 2: Income Thresholds by Decile*

Figure 2 (below) illustrates the total proportion of income in each of the sub-sectors. Health reported the largest proportion of total income followed by social services. Although sports and recreational organisations were one of the largest sub-sectors in the study (at 16.3% of organisations), their combined income only accounted for 2.5 per cent of total reported income. Likewise, environmental organisations comprised six per cent of respondents but received less than one per cent of overall income. Meanwhile international development organisations comprised less than two per cent of responding organisations but received nine per cent of income. From these data we can detect potential resource vulnerabilities for different groups.

Differences in income size could also be seen by age; older organisations had larger incomes than those organisations established from the mid-1980s.
Sources of income

- Among state-funded organisations, health groups claimed 30 per cent of this funding followed by social services (17%), education and research (16%) and development and housing (13.4%).

- International development organisations reported receiving over one-quarter of total private donations. Social services claimed a fifth (21.6%) of this income followed by philanthropic organisations (10.4%).

- Philanthropic organisations also claimed the highest proportion of corporate funds - almost half (45.6%).

- Revenue from membership dues was concentrated in trade unions and professional associations, followed by development and housing and sports and recreation groups.

- Income from fees emerged as of most importance to education and research organisations which received over one-third of the reported income from this source. Fees were also important to health organisations and development and housing organisations.

Expenditure

In total, €2.556 billion was reported as expenditure by 3,343 organisations. If we gross up this figure to the original sampling frame of over 20,000 organisations, the potential contribution can be calculated at €4.472 billion or 3.84 per cent of GNP.

Comparing income and expenditure amounts, some groups of organisations were found to be more susceptible to resource insufficiency than others. This was particularly the case for environmental organisations, whose income was just half their expenditure, and also for arts, culture and heritage organisations whose income was just three-quarters their expenditure.
Volunteering

Briefly, volunteering data can be summed up as follows.

- The number of reported volunteers within organisations ranged from 1 to 380,000. The total number of volunteers was 1,071,108. However, only 11 per cent of organisations reported having more than 100 volunteers.
- The average contribution was 21 hours per month but 50 per cent of organisations reported 10 hours per month or less.
- Twenty eight per cent of Ireland-based volunteers were female and 55 per cent male (17% of organisations did not give a gender breakdown). In total, 588,360 male volunteers were recorded and 302,241 female volunteers.
- Volunteers were also engaged in a wide range of activities from delivering meals on wheels to being a member of a sports club. At least 62 per cent of male volunteers were active in the field of sports and recreation.

Paid Staff

Forty-five per cent of organisations reported having full time staff, while 42 per cent reported having part-time staff and 25 per cent staff on state-supported schemes. Briefly,

- 40,003 full time employees were reported, which would correspond to 2.4 per cent of the full time labour force in 2005.
- 14,754 part-time staff were recorded, which represents 4.3% of total part-time staff nationally, as well as a further 9,509 staff on state-supported employment schemes.
- Women outnumbered men by two to one in full-time employment, by four to one in part-time employment and by a ratio of 1:1.65 in state-sponsored employment (not all organisations provided a gender breakdown of staff, however).

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