2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report

The thread that binds

Volunteerism and community resilience

UN VOLUNTEERS

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FOREWORD

WEAVING NEW PATTERNS OF RESILIENCE WITH COMMUNITIES

We live in extraordinary times, and the world faces challenges that can seem overwhelming or even insurmountable. Climate change continues unchecked. Inequality has soared. Politics becomes ever more polarized. We see a resurgence of political ideologies in parts of the world that have not been such a threat since the end of World War II. At the same time, we have the largest migration crisis in human history. Last year, over 68 million people worldwide were on the move – fleeing conflict, instability, poverty and lack of opportunity.

When we look at this picture, it can be tempting to take the easy path to pessimism. The harder and bolder path of optimism is the path laid out in the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda by world leaders almost three years ago charted a trajectory to a shared future for both people and planet that breaks markedly from the sometimes damaging norms and trends of the past.

Realizing the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda requires mobilizing extraordinary resources and talents and the goodwill of ordinary people around the world – and UN Volunteers, working alongside local volunteers around the world, are stepping up to the challenge.

An estimated 1 billion volunteers are freely giving their time to make a difference on the issues that affect them and their communities, often in the most difficult of circumstances.

With the launch of this report, the United Nations Volunteers programme and the United Nations Development Programme are tackling an issue that is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals – resilience. Resilience is about ensuring that communities can prevent and adapt to environmental and economic risks, and this report demonstrates how volunteerism contributes to building this resilience, weaving a strong social fabric for these communities.

Volunteerism connects people, enabling them to work together to tackle the pressing issues of our time. To make good on the promise to make the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for all, we need everyone to follow the lead of the current estimated 1 billion volunteers and make a difference in each of our communities.

Achim Steiner
Administrator, United Nations Development Programme

PREFACE

MAKING THE INVISIBLE THREADS VISIBLE

Every day I see and hear about the dedicated efforts of the thousands of UN Volunteers and millions of local volunteers working around the world. As this report demonstrates, volunteers are at the forefront of every major shock and stress, responding to problems big and small within various communities.

How that looks may differ across countries and is changing in the face of ever more complex challenges. Over the past year I have visited volunteers in the Central African Republic, where community organizations are helping with trauma-healing and protection of those displaced by conflict; Mali and Niger, where volunteers are offering their time and expertise to fight malnutrition; and Nepal, where the delivery of livelihood assistance to victims of natural disasters would not have been possible without volunteers.

At the other end of the scale we are now seeing greater recognition of volunteering in international frameworks and agreements. Since the last State of the World's Volunteerism Report in 2015, volunteers have been lauded as a critical resource and a cross-cutting means of implementation under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. More recently, 17 United Nations Member States highlighted the contributions of volunteers in their Voluntary National Reviews at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2017.

To take this recognition further and as part of our support of knowledge exchange on volunteerism, this third State of the World's Volunteerism Report provides new evidence on the relationship between volunteering and community resilience. From a starting point of communities in crisis, the report offers insights into how best to support local volunteerism – beyond the headlines, where volunteers are often doing the lion's share of the work day in, day out. By unpacking the distribution of the costs and benefits of local volunteerism under strain, the report examines how governments and other peace and development actors can more effectively support volunteers. As all stakeholders look to localize development processes and reach out first to those furthest behind, the report provides new perspectives on the potential for volunteerism to be a force for inclusion and the circumstances under which it can confront rather than reinforce inequalities within and across communities.

A national UN volunteer conducts a market survey in Nabaa, Lebanon (UNDP Lebanon, 2017).

These are challenging and complex issues that surround the choices and actions that people facing shocks and stresses take every day to shape their communities and societies. Improving our understanding of these issues requires, first and foremost, listening to volunteers. As such, for the first time the State of the World's Volunteerism Report draws on original research carried out by volunteers, with over 1,200 participants in 15 communities around the world. From Bolivia to the Netherlands, from Greece to Madagascar and Malawi, the report paints a picture of the highs and the lows, the exhilaration and the frustration, of working together for a common cause. I thank these volunteers for sharing their stories with us. In doing so, they help shine a light on the critical roles of all types of people in resilience-building.

For our part, UNV will continue to enable the global constituency of volunteers to share their experience and inform development policy and practice. This report is an important contribution to the development of a road map for the role of volunteerism under the 2030 Agenda. Led by United Nations Member States and in partnership with all stakeholders during 2019 and 2020, the plan of action to integrate volunteering into peace and development (UNGA A/RES/70/129) will support the unparalleled efforts of ordinary people everywhere to shape a better world. I hope that many of you will join us on that journey.

Olivier Adam
Executive Coordinator, United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme

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OVERVIEW

VOLUNTEERISM: THE THREAD THAT BINDS

Resilient communities allow for dynamic interactions between people facing threats and their environments. Understanding how such interactions occur is essential for supporting people-led approaches to peace and development. Volunteerism enables individuals to work together, shaping collective opportunities for dealing with risk and connecting individuals and communities with wider systems of support. Volunteerism as a universal social behaviour is therefore a critical resource for community resilience.

At the same time, communities around the world are changing, often in response to an increased frequency and intensity of shocks and stresses. Little is known about how this influences volunteerism and its manifestations across different contexts. In light of these changing patterns of risk, it is important to understand if and how individuals and groups are continuing to organize and connect and whether collective responses within communities are ultimately reinforcing or challenging the wider social, political and economic inequalities that exacerbate the vulnerability of marginalized groups.

This 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR), *The thread that binds*, looks at how volunteerism and community resilience interact across diverse contexts. It explores the strengths and limitations of community responses to a range of shocks and stresses, and it examines how external actors can build on communities' self-organization in a complementary way, nurturing the most beneficial characteristics of volunteerism while mitigating against potential harms to the most vulnerable. In doing so, the report provides an important contribution to the evidence base on inclusive, citizen-led approaches to resilience-building.

KEY FINDINGS

Local volunteerism is a fundamental resilience strategy and a property of resilient communities.

The scale and scope of volunteer activity in responding to shocks and stresses are unparalleled. Moreover, the contribution of volunteerism goes far beyond its magnitude because, like other types of civic participation, it is both a means to development and an end in itself.

Local volunteerism enables collective strategies for managing risk.

By bringing together individual actions under a shared purpose, volunteerism expands the choices and opportunities available to communities as they prepare for and respond to crises.

The characteristics of local volunteerism most valued by communities are the ability to self-organize and to form connections with others.

Community members appreciate the ability to set their own development priorities and to take ownership of local problems. The networks, trust and empathy generated through social action are acknowledged across all contexts.

These distinctive characteristics of local volunteerism can both boost and diminish community resilience under different conditions.

The duality of volunteering as both a means and an end of development means that each characteristic of volunteerism is potentially positive or negative depending on the context.

Volunteerism is particularly significant for vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Mutual aid, self-help and reciprocity are important coping strategies for isolated and vulnerable communities. Self-organized actions can help marginalized groups meet their own needs in the absence of wider provisions and services.

The costs and benefits of volunteerism are not always distributed equitably.

Women are more likely to take on the majority of informal volunteering in their own communities, for example, in an extension of domestic caring roles. Access to formal volunteering opportunities to develop skills, create new connections and access resources are not available for all, particularly those in low-income contexts.

The manner in which external actors engage with local volunteerism matters.

Collaborations should nurture the positive characteristics of volunteerism valued by communities – its self-organizing and relationship-strengthening properties. Peace and development actors can undermine volunteerism when they engage with people merely as a cheap and proximal resource. Done badly, partnerships with local volunteers can reinforce inequalities.

Effective collaboration with volunteers can transform volunteering from a coping mechanism to a strategic resource for community resilience.

Forming complementary partnerships with communities helps to balance risks more equitably, maximizing the potential of volunteering to positively impact those often left furthest behind. Appropriately pooling resources and capacities across actors enables communities to take longer-term preventative approaches to dealing with risk.

An enabling environment for volunteerism strengthens community resilience.

Governments and other stakeholders can strengthen the contribution of volunteerism to resilience-building in two ways: firstly, by nurturing an ecosystem for effective volunteering and secondly, by forming partnerships based on greater appreciation of the value of communities' own contributions. This will ensure that localization processes under the 2030 Agenda build on the commitment and innovations of citizens everywhere.

CHAPTER 1

"A powerful and cross-cutting means of implementation": Volunteerism as a global asset for peace and development

Volunteerism forms part of the fabric of all societies. It can be a critical resource for peace and development, yet more evidence is needed to understand the value of volunteer contributions to economy and society, particularly in fragile contexts. To improve the evidence base on volunteerism and as a starting point for revealing the diverse manifestations of volunteering globally, this report presents a new analysis of volunteerism's scale, scope and trends using data from United Nations Member States.

New analysis puts the global volunteer workforce at 109 million full-time equivalent workers, a number exceeding that of many major global industries. Of this 109 million, 30 per cent is volunteering that takes place formally through organizations, associations and groups. More difficult to capture and often less visible to mainstream development actors, the majority of global volunteer activity (70 per cent) occurs directly through informal engagement between individuals (definitions of key terms can be found in annex 1).

As volunteerism is a social behaviour, geography, gender, age and other social, economic and political realities affect people's ability to volunteer. Overall, more volunteering is undertaken by women than by men, at 57 per cent and 43 per cent respectively. Formal volunteering is relatively evenly distributed between the sexes, but women account for a larger share of informal voluntary action – nearly 60 per cent worldwide. This is significant not least because informal volunteering tends to have lower status and attracts less practical support from stakeholders outside of the community.

A qualitative analysis of global trends shows that volunteers have been at the forefront of every major crisis since the last State of the World's Volunteerism Report published in 2015. Technology, policy and social norms are all shaping the new conditions under which voluntary efforts are made. While this provides new opportunities for volunteering for some people in some contexts, for others it can represent additional barriers to participation.

Globally, new data and analysis in this report illustrate that people are volunteering at scale, although access and participation are affected by variables such as geography and gender and influenced by a wide range of norms, customs, policies and investments. Informal action is the most common form of volunteering globally and is a major feature in most of the communities participating in the field research for this report, many of which have insufficient access to basic services, security and protection.

Recognizing that volunteering is prevalent in communities struggling to cope, what does this look like on the ground? How are vulnerable communities organizing themselves to deal with the risks and threats they face each day? How do the distinctive contributions of local volunteerism enhance or inhibit community resilience?

CHAPTER 2

"It has to be us": Local volunteerism in communities under strain

The battle for resilience will be won or lost together with communities. Volunteerism provides a mechanism for channelling individual actions into collective strategies for coping with risk. The 2030 Agenda emphasizes a people-centred approach to development, but while localization debates often focus on national ownership, less attention is paid to the

mix of capacities required at the national level down to the community level. Exploring the role of local volunteers provides insights into the possibilities and limits of locally-owned action and the thresholds for external support.

Communities value the distinctive contributions of volunteers. The field research for this report focused on communities' perceptions of how volunteerism helped or hindered their ability to cope. Two distinctive characteristics of volunteering were prioritized by research participants: the human-centred connections created through voluntary action, and the opportunity to self-organize.

Participants spoke highly of the social relationships developed through shared voluntary action, noting that such relationships forge bonds of solidarity, enhance trust, expand people's support base and lessen their vulnerability to shocks and stresses. Volunteering also opens channels to other stakeholders, connecting community members to wider support networks. Resilience is strongest when people are embedded in a web of diverse networks, relationships and connections that enable capacities and coping mechanisms that are unavailable to people acting alone.

Equally important is the ability to self-organize to cope with stresses and shocks. Self-organization sustains community autonomy by avoiding dependence on outside actors. Self-organized volunteering is a key strategy for marginalized groups whose needs are not adequately addressed by formal institutions.

Beyond a romantic view of volunteering in communities in crisis. Although local voluntary action offers a wealth of advantages to communities, it also brings substantial challenges. While voluntary community action is a consensual endeavour, it is not inevitably inclusive or egalitarian. As a survival strategy, people under stress tend to focus on helping those within their own circles. The burden of volunteering can disproportionately disadvantage more vulnerable groups, stretching the already limited time, capacity and resources of vulnerable people to breaking point. Furthermore, constrained by resources, local volunteering can often prioritize immediate needs over prevention and adaptation, so long-term solutions to persistent shocks may be overlooked.

Where stresses and shocks exceed the threshold of positive contributions by community volunteers, there is good reason to explore connections outside the community. Done well, contributions from external actors can complement local action.

CHAPTER 3

"We see the limits of what we do": Collaborations with local volunteerism for community resilience

Despite the strong relationships, self-organizing capacity, quick response and flexibility that characterize local volunteers, it is difficult for self-organizing communities to be optimally resilient without complementary support from external stakeholders.[1] For the purposes of this report, external stakeholders are considered to be those originating from outside the community's boundary – be it from neighbouring communities, subnational or national authorities, international organizations or any other private or public actor.

Resilient systems share risk and responsibility at the appropriate level, from local to international, protecting the positive impacts of volunteering while mitigating against harms.

Collaboration with external actors can complement local volunteering. Local volunteers in the field research communities stressed how difficult it was to maintain voluntary efforts over the long term without ongoing external support. Collaborating with external actors can help communities safeguard their assets and livelihoods during acute adversity by bringing in financial, human and technological resources to sustain local action and co-produce more efficient solutions. Examples from the field research communities also highlighted how collaborations with external actors can increase the participation of people who would otherwise remain isolated and excluded, enabling volunteerism to realize its potential as an inclusive and empowering force. Furthermore, local volunteers can strengthen their standing in the community through legal recognition by government and the formalization that non-governmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations agencies and other development and humanitarian actors can confer.

Local volunteers can strengthen development interventions by external actors. Connections with external actors can help communities engage more effectively within wider risk-sharing systems to enhance their resilience. Local volunteers are well positioned to help development experts and national and international responders understand the needs of the more vulnerable and hidden groups in their community, and as intermediaries, volunteers can build bridges of trust that enable them to relay important information from technical agencies, governments and other external actors to community-based groups (top-down), while also bringing issues of community concern to the attention of those external organizations (bottom-up).

Collaborations must be designed carefully so as not to undermine community capacities. Support from external agencies can weaken local self-organization and ownership if it is too heavy-handed or lasts too long. Local ownership can be undermined when community volunteers are not able to articulate their own priorities but are still called upon to implement the priorities of external agencies. Local volunteers cannot substitute for the responsibility of government and humanitarian aid systems to meet basic community needs. Ultimately, governments and their development partners need to balance the autonomy and independence that self-organized volunteer groups have achieved with efforts to integrate them into external systems of support.

CHAPTER 4

"This work can't be measured by a financial ruler": Volunteerism as a renewable resource

Volunteerism strengthens local ownership, solidarity and inclusive participation, and it allows for swift responses to proximate crises. At the same time, under certain conditions volunteerism can be exclusive, burdensome, short-term and of limited effectiveness. This potential duality of volunteerism means that governments and development partners have an important role to play in maximizing volunteerism's positive contributions. Stakeholders must be mindful not to partner with volunteers as a source of cheap labour but rather would be well advised to nurture volunteerism as an attribute of resilient communities. This can be done through developing an ecosystem for resilient volunteering and creating new community partnerships with that work towards local resilience.

Nurturing a renewable resource by building an ecosystem for resilient volunteerism. Governments and development partners can best support communities through the development of nationally owned resilience ecosystems that align with national development priorities and plans and broaden access to the benefits of volunteering to the most marginalized groups. In doing so, the increasingly irrelevant divide between "official"

and "unofficial" actors can be broken down, allowing due recognition and acknowledgement of the innovation, flexibility and significant time and effort provided every day by citizens to address development challenges.

Enabling more equitable partnerships between communities and wider actors. Community compacts or agreements would enable the voices of community volunteers to be heard in the context of resilience planning by local and national authorities. Such agreements would also form the basis for joint initiatives between communities and wider stakeholders, allowing the decentralization of resources and more predictable investments for prevention and adaptation. Embedding standards and principles for inclusion would also help foster a more equitable division of responsibilities within and across communities.

CONCLUSION

Weaving new patterns of resilience

If resilient communities are part of the fabric of society, then investments in voluntary action can prevent at-risk communities from fraying at the seams. Exposed to persistent shocks and stresses and with inequitable resourcing and underdeveloped capacities, local volunteers on the frontlines can struggle to stay ahead. Under threat, communities marshal the limited time and resources at their disposal to cope, but external actors can safeguard the natural human response of volunteering as a core property of resilient communities by balancing their support with the autonomy required for self-organized voluntary action to thrive.

Collaborations that understand and nurture local capacities can help transform volunteerism from a coping strategy to a strategic resource for the prevention of crises and to enable adaptation to new risks. Furthermore, sustainable partnerships with communities can strengthen the potential of volunteerism to more meaningfully include vulnerable groups in development processes.

Under the 2030 Agenda, there is often an implicit assumption that "going local" will address marginalization and open up pathways to empowerment. Although the potential benefits of localized, voluntary and people-centred approaches to development are abundant, this report calls for a new urgency in ensuring that inclusive standards receive greater prominence in discussions of community resilience so that voluntary action can become an inclusive and equitable means of preparing for and coping with risks and, ultimately, a renewable resource for peace and development.

INTRODUCTION

WHY THIS REPORT AND WHY NOW?

"We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibres, our actions run as causes and return to us as results."

– **Rev. Henry Melvill**

"We live according to the saying: 'Stone are those who are united, and sand those that move apart'".

– **Local volunteer**, Madagascar, SWVR field research

A UN Volunteer works on the Participatory Settlement Upgrade Program in Nairobi, Kenya (Jennifer Huxta, 2014).

Episodes of instability have become more frequent and intense in many countries.[2] Incidents ranging from those related to climate change and natural disasters to conflict and dislocation have created multiple vulnerabilities, even in countries with a long history of financial and political stability. Recurrent disaster risks are on the rise, with losses concentrated in low- and middle-income countries.[3] Political instability, conflict and terrorism cost thousands of human lives and weaken the global economy by trillions of dollars each year.[4] Although the long view suggests that armed conflict is declining overall,[5] the divide between the most and least peaceful countries has widened.[6] Increasing civil and other internal conflict is reflected in rising populism, polarization and political instability in many countries.[7] Demographic trends and growing inequities arising from current economic models are exacerbating global instabilities.

Community resilience is an intrinsic protective response for human vulnerability when faced with volatility and fragility.[8] Resilience is a common thread running through the three current main international development, peacebuilding and humanitarian frameworks: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement on climate change. As global systems and structures have become more interdependent, the prerequisites for development include the ability to resolve conflict and sustain peace, the ability to prepare for and absorb shocks, and the ability to establish sustainable development processes that work for all people and groups, both now and in the future.[9]

The agency of people in resilience thinking

Resilience models conceptualize communities as clusters of individuals, groups and organizations that are part of larger social-ecological systems, each with their own risks, vulnerabilities, fractures and tensions.[10,11] This includes the roles that people have within and across communities and the forms and structures that allow them to work together at different levels to solve problems. Likewise, theories of community resilience emphasize that space must be made for vulnerable groups to operate as key actors alongside other stakeholders.[12,13] With an emphasis on relationships and networks within a wider system, focusing on resilience allows us to confront the underlying causes of people's vulnerability, raising questions about why adverse circumstances such as conflicts, economic shocks and climate change affect certain people or communities more than others based on their position in social, political and economic structures (box 1).

Resilience strategies emphasize the agency and capacities of people and groups. When shocks and stresses hit, diverse enclaves of vulnerable people may be able to come together within communities to confront them.[14] This ability to respond together reflects the key characteristics of resilient communities, including self-organization, connectivity, participation and the empowerment of vulnerable groups.[15,16] Although partnerships with other types of institutions may come into play, voluntary actions by communities themselves will necessarily play an important role in community resilience.

The way that volunteer efforts are expressed and organized is likely to reflect the structures, social norms and cultural practices embedded within the communities. Furthermore, a range of factors, from the decentralization of governance arrangements to societal gender norms, will influence local capacities to connect to wider resilience systems.

Box **1**

Features of community resilience

This report defines resilience as "the ability to prepare and plan for, absorb, recover from and more successfully adapt to adverse events". While dominant political structures and social processes have the power to affect people's livelihoods, this definition fits well with current inquiries into volunteerism because it recognizes the importance of people's ability to affect those structures and processes through voluntary action.

Many models, frameworks and definitions of resilience focus on different phases of the process. A key assumption is that shocks and stresses cannot always be avoided and that therefore communities need to plan for conflict and disruption by anticipating and planning for change in ways that enhance community resilience. A people-centred view may challenge the distinctions between phases, as volunteerism actively shapes avenues and opportunities to cope through cycles and patterns of risk.

The term adverse events refers to both shocks and stresses that disrupt a system functioning normally. Shocks are sudden and unexpected events that are potentially dangerous. They include both natural and human-made activities or conditions that can cause the loss of life and livelihoods. Stresses are longer-term processes with less acute impact and may include expected seasonal price fluctuations, periods of unemployment or poor health, incremental change in climate, small-scale conflicts and other circumstances that undermine livelihoods. Shocks and stresses interact and are often mutually reinforcing.

Sources: Frankenberger and others 2012; National Research Council 2012; Pasteur 2011; Sharifi and Yamagata 2016

Local volunteers clear debris in the aftermath of the 2015 Nepal earthquake (UNV, 2015).

Volunteerism and community resilience – beyond the headlines

The 2011 State of the World's Volunteerism Report demonstrated that voluntary action in response to shocks and stresses is one of the clearest expressions of the human values and agency underpinning the drive to help others. Every day in communities throughout the world, volunteers organize to tackle long-term economic, social and environmental stresses that test community resilience, such as poor education, ill health, bad governance, poverty and food insecurity.[17] The line between voluntary and collective action is often blurred under these conditions. Where public support and social safety nets are absent, volunteering emerges as a fundamental survival strategy.

Although volunteers self-organize to meet the needs that arise from ongoing and persistent stresses afflicting their communities, the significance of voluntary action is accentuated in times of acute crisis. Volunteers have been at the forefront of every major conflict, natural disaster and other acute shock in the past few years.[18] For instance, volunteers took an early lead in responding to the 2015 Nepal earthquake and the recovery and reconstruction efforts that followed.[19] Local, national and international volunteers worked together during the 2014–16 Ebola outbreak in West Africa to tend to victims and halt the spread of the disease, despite considerable and cross-border challenges.[20,21] Likewise, diverse groups of volunteers have stepped up to welcome refugees and displaced people fleeing war and conflict in the Middle East and Africa while many state actors and NGOs have been gripped by political and bureaucratic paralysis.[22] Across the world in 2017, the growing number of

extreme weather events linked to climate change – including catastrophic flooding in South Asia, hurricanes in the Caribbean and the United States[23] and mudslides in Sierra Leone – have also pushed volunteer responses to the fore.

However, local volunteerism, particularly when volunteer participation is informal, should not be romanticized. To be most effective, volunteers often require support from wider, more formalized structures. The self-organization of local volunteering is rooted in community power dynamics and politics, meaning that it may exclude some vulnerable groups. Yet another challenge is that spontaneous volunteers who are not well integrated can hamper effective responses.[24]

As volunteers are demonstrably active in every major shock and stress experienced by communities, decision-makers need to better understand the relationship between volunteerism and community resilience so that voluntary action has the best opportunity to contribute to the collective and public good. Governments and other stakeholders also need to understand how to best support volunteer action as a core property of resilient communities. Although the global knowledge base on volunteerism is growing, the distinctive and complementary contributions of volunteer efforts are less well researched.[25,26] In a volatile, rapidly transforming world, it is vital to understand how different forms of volunteerism – many of them embedded in cultural traditions, norms and values – are changing in response to risks associated with urbanization, environmental degradation, involuntary migration, extreme weather patterns and the polarization of societies, among other global changes.

Volunteerism is a universal social behaviour that builds on people's desire to engage with change rather than to passively experience development processes

The distinctive contributions of volunteerism to community resilience

Building resilient communities requires the dedicated efforts of millions of volunteers. Volunteerism is a universal social behaviour that builds on people's desire to engage with change rather than to passively experience development processes. Neither public nor private actors would be able to fully compensate, qualitatively or quantitatively, for the voluntary efforts of citizens actively engaged in their communities and societies. Volunteerism has the potential to contribute to community resilience by enabling vulnerable groups to organize flexibly, respond in real time and adapt in the face of changing patterns of risk.

The existing research on volunteerism provides a starting point for understanding its contribution to peace and development. Volunteers can enhance the ability of communities to cope with shocks and stresses by increasing human capital,[27] strengthening social capital and well-being,[28] enhancing natural capital[29] and developing financial capital.[30] Research also demonstrates that by offering critical social support[31] and linking local and external actors,[32] volunteers can reduce disaster risks. In fragile states and post-conflict environments, volunteers can strengthen community resilience by integrating refugees and displaced people,[33] building ownership in the peace and development process and strengthening social cohesion within and across groups.[34] Volunteers are key actors in crises[35] – the vast majority of survivors of a disaster are rescued by local volunteers[36,37] – but volunteering is not a panacea. The evidence base shows that it can reinforce social divisions[38] and inhibit coordinated responses,[39] and while external actors can help develop local capacities,[40] they can also create dependencies that weaken resilience at the community level.[41]

Evidence of what sets volunteering apart from other resilience-building approaches is lacking. Current knowledge about volunteer activity tends to focus on its ability to mitigate, manage and respond to community risks and shocks, while much less is known

about volunteer activity as a discrete *property* of resilient communities. What the human-centred connections and self-organizing characteristics of volunteerism mean for the resilience of communities is not well understood. When volunteering is viewed merely as a cost-reduction strategy, its most important characteristics and complementarities are undervalued. Even narratives that feature volunteerism within a resilience context focus mainly on volunteers' roles in short-term or cyclical interventions – typically responding to or recovering from shocks and stresses.[42] Less study has been devoted to how the capacities of volunteers can support prevention and adaptation strategies that help communities actually avoid cycles of disaster and response.[43]

The forms and contexts in which volunteerism can foster resilience for all, including for those who have been left behind, also need careful examination. How does volunteerism interact with community resilience in the least developed countries? How does volunteerism include or exclude people managing diverse forms of risk, especially where the local political economy produces glaring inequalities that challenge efforts to equitably promote volunteerism?[44,45] For instance, while there has been some research on the intersection of gender, power and resilience (mainly in analyses of vulnerability and capacities),[46,47] there has been little if any attention paid to volunteerism as a strategy for empowerment. For development aid to be effective, disenfranchised and marginalized people must have opportunities to self-organize and to influence key decisions.[48,49] This leads to the critical question: how can volunteerism effectively and equitably contribute to longer-term community resilience in the 21st century?

When volunteering is viewed merely as a cost-reduction strategy, its most important characteristics and complementarities are undervalued

This report presents the results of original research and analysis to understand the distinctive ways volunteerism contributes to or inhibits community resilience over the long term. It improves our understanding of how all stakeholders such as governments, United Nations agencies, civil society and the private sector can engage with volunteerism as a resource for achieving national and international development goals.

The 2018 SWVR volunteer researchers prepare for community discussions in Bolivia (UNV, 2017).

Scope of this report

To extend the knowledge base on volunteerism, this report (figure 1):

- combines the theoretical and empirical evidence on community resilience and volunteerism under a common framework for the first time;
- offers the most precise global estimates on volunteering through research and analysis based on statistics on volunteering from United Nations Member States;
- describes the current policy, legislative and investment climate for volunteering across different contexts; and
- presents evidence on how the distinctive characteristics of volunteering help or hinder community resilience – a perspective that is often lacking in the existing literature.

For the first time the report draws on the primary research on volunteerism and resilience undertaken across diverse communities in five regions. In 2017, 22 volunteers conducted qualitative research across 15 communities over the course of five months (box 2). The more than 1,200 research participants included local community members, volunteers, government and civil society stakeholders, and others. These participants identified their own priority threats and risks at the community level and identified the ways in which volunteerism strengthened or hindered the resilience of their communities (see annex 4 for details about the research methodology).

Findings from this research illustrate how local (largely informal) voluntary action can enhance or diminish the capacities of communities under strain. Recognizing the limitations of local voluntary action, the findings also illustrate the complementary value of support from outside the community, particularly when volunteerism reaches the limits of local action. Done well, volunteerism enables all types of actors to collaborate and contribute

Box **2**

Selection of 15 communities for data collection

> CHARACTERISTICS

To fill some of the knowledge gaps on the links between volunteerism and community resilience, 15 communities in 15 countries were selected for fieldwork. Five communities were in urban areas (China, Egypt, Greece, Netherlands and Russian Federation), and 10 were in rural areas (Bolivia, Burundi, Guatemala, Madagascar, Malawi, Myanmar, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Tanzania). Three communities were in areas that had experienced recent conflict (Burundi, Philippines and Sudan), and three were in areas that had recently received a large number of migrants and asylum seekers (Greece, Netherlands and Malawi). Each of the communities featured notable voluntary action across a range of shocks and stresses (see annexes 4–7 for details about the communities and the selection process).

> DATA COLLECTION AND METHODS

To ensure consistency in design, data collection, quality assurance and instrumentation, the research team developed a conceptual and measurement framework and an implementation guide that could be applied across these diverse contexts. Data was collected through 110 focus group discussions and 174 stakeholder interviews, reflecting the combined perspectives of more than 1,200 participants. Data analysis included qualitative coding and interpretation of interview transcripts using a standardized scheme. This analytic approach allowed for comparison of communities but was also flexible enough to allow for the addition of new categories that emerged from local contexts.
The final global analysis collated findings across the 15 community reports to identify common patterns and themes. Researchers reviewed and validated the initial findings through participatory processes with the research communities and other local stakeholders (see annex 4 for details about the research process).

to the complex solutions needed by resilient communities without undermining the self-organizing capacities of those local communities. The research and analysis for this report strengthens our knowledge of how all stakeholders such as governments, United Nations agencies, civil society and the private sector can engage with volunteerism in a sustainable and equitable way to make communities more resilient. The first chapter of the report contextualizes this analysis by providing an overview of the current state of volunteerism, using the latest data to illustrate the scale and scope of voluntary action in 2018.

Figure 1

Scope and approach of this report

INTRODUCTION	CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 4
Why look at volunteerism for resilience?	**What** is volunteerism for resilience at the global level?	**How** do volunteerism and resilience interact at the community level?	**Who** can collaborate with local volunteerism to strengthen community resilience?	**How** can volunteerism be maximized for resilience?
	• Estimating the scale and scope of volunteerism globally, page 10 • Rates of volunteering across regions, countries and groups, page 11 • Diverse trends and patterns shape expressions of volunteerism, page 17	• Expressions of local volunteering in the community, page 25 • What communities value: distinctive contributions of local volunteering to resilience, page 29 • Limitations and challenges of local volunteering, page 45	• Collaborations with external actors can complement local volunteering, page 58 • Local volunteers can strengthen development interventions by external actors, page 64 • Collaborations must be structured carefully, page 69	• Developing an ecosystem for resilient volunteerism, page 77 • Facilitating a community compact for resilience, page 85

A POWERFUL AND CROSS-CUTTING
MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION:

VOLUNTEERISM

AS A GLOBAL ASSET FOR PEACE
AND DEVELOPMENT

"As we seek to build capacities and to help the new agenda to take root, volunteerism can be another powerful and cross-cutting means of implementation. Volunteerism can help to expand and mobilize constituencies, and to engage people in national planning and implementation for sustainable development goals. And volunteer groups can help to localize the new agenda by providing new spaces of interaction between governments and people for concrete and scalable actions."

– **The Road to Dignity by 2030**[50]

UN Volunteers in Lao PDR work on a drug prevention programme (UNV Lao PDR, 2011).

1

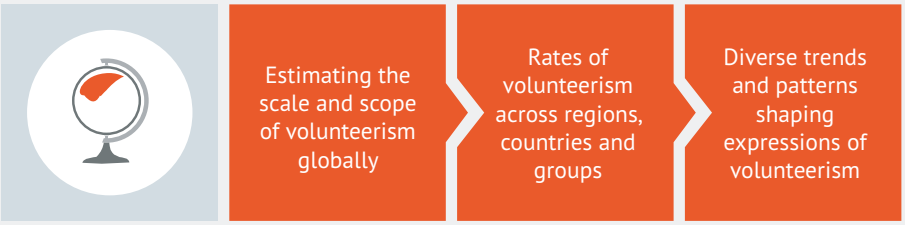
Volunteerism exists in all societies. It can be a critical resource for peace and development, yet not all governments systematically measure it to understand its role and contribution. To improve the evidence base, this chapter presents new estimates of volunteerism's scale, scope and trends at a global level using data from United Nations Member States. The analysis reveals patterns in the types and distribution of voluntary work around the world and identifies key trends, including the influence of public policy, technology and investment. The analysis presented here is a starting point for better understanding the diverse manifestations of volunteering globally.

Understanding volunteerism as a social behaviour means acknowledging that geography, gender, age and other social, economic and political realities affect people's voluntary action. When examined more closely, these influences reveal many different stories about how and why people participate. Some volunteerism is sporadic or episodic, while other forms are systematic and predictable. Volunteering opportunities may be created by organizations, while others are informal and spontaneous, taking place directly between individuals. Although most voluntary action happens at the local level, people may volunteer in neighbouring communities, at a national level, internationally and online. Gender and social status also shape the forms and functions of volunteer activity.

This chapter examines macro trends in volunteerism, including the scale and scope of volunteerism worldwide. Although the comparative global evidence on volunteerism does not yet allow for detailed disaggregation of findings, this report provides new evidence of key differences across various types of voluntary action. As this data illustrates, volunteering of all types is a substantial social and economic input across all societies, even exceeding the global workforce of many major industries.[51]

Figure **1.1**

Scope of Chapter 1 What is volunteerism for resilience at the global level?



To better understand the issues as they stand in 2018, this chapter complements its reporting on macro trends by exploring themes in the research and evidence on volunteerism that have emerged since the 2015 SWVR, including the new global consensus on development expressed later that same year at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit. These global policies and patterns continue to shape expressions of and influence support for volunteerism worldwide.

➔ Estimating the scale and scope of global volunteerism is challenging and vital

Volunteerism embraces a diverse set of actors and activities and has varying impacts on peace and development, depending on the context. This diversity means that the concept is understood in different ways in different countries and even within them. As emphasized in the 2011 SWVR, definitions of volunteerism in cross-national comparisons will inevitably remain contested.[52,53] While recognizing these differences, this report uses the definition of volunteerism that was adopted in a 2002 United Nations General Assembly Resolution: "activities undertaken of free will, for the general public good and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor".[54,55] Under this inclusive definition, volunteerism encompasses both formal activities performed through organizations and informal actions performed by individuals outside of formally registered organizations. This report focuses on local volunteerism or voluntary civic participation by people living within a geographically localized community.[56,57] Although local volunteering is largely informal, it can also include formal voluntary action through community-based organizations.[58]

Differences in people's understanding of volunteerism inhibit global agreement on a definition (box 1.1), and the logistics of data collection limit the reliability of cross-national data. Unlike paid employment, volunteer work is typically performed irregularly, which complicates the measurement of how much volunteering occurs.[59]

Although national statistical agencies view volunteering as a form of unpaid work that has social and economic value, only a handful of countries, largely high-income, regularly measure volunteering, and they have done so inconsistently.[60] And when volunteering is measured, the focus has often been primarily on organization-based volunteering, to the neglect of volunteering performed spontaneously by people in their communities.

Box **1.1**

Who is a volunteer?

Volunteerism takes many forms, and the designation and meaning of volunteering varies by context. Many people who perform voluntary actions would not strongly identify as volunteers. Some forms of volunteering rooted in religion or custom may have evolved over generations and be considered a core part of local tradition. Motivations may have become intertwined with feelings of duty and solidarity or with a person's moral code and are often rooted in people's desire to exercise choice and to act spontaneously. These motivations all influence how people understand and interpret voluntary action. Public attitudes to volunteering also differ, with volunteers stigmatized or de-prioritized in some contexts while idealized in others – according to the task, status of the people involved and other factors. In this report, volunteering is frequently described as either formal or informal. Formal volunteering is organized through organizations and associations, while informal volunteering is done directly between persons. In reality and particularly at a community level the distinction between the two may be less evident.

Sources: Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003; Taniguchi and Thomas 2011; UNV 2011; Wilson 2000

Despite these challenges, estimating the scale and scope of volunteering worldwide is important. Doing so can help development practitioners extend their reach to marginalized groups and enable policymakers to estimate the economic value and contribution of volunteerism to national accounts. In addition, these data can improve decision-makers' understanding of who has access to volunteer opportunities and who does not, strengthening their ability to identify and eliminate barriers to voluntary action. Stakeholders can use this knowledge to improve volunteers' contributions to peace and development.

Incremental improvements in measurement over the past two decades have increased the accuracy of global estimates of volunteerism. In 2013, through the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), the International Labour Organization (ILO) spearheaded the adoption of new international statistical standards that provide a framework for integrating volunteer work into official work statistics.[61] Key references, such as the ILO *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work*, the United Nations *Handbook on Non-profit Institutions in the System of National Accounts*, time-use surveys and other national volunteering surveys, contribute to the knowledge database and enable more accurate estimates of the prevalence, scope and composition of volunteerism worldwide for both formal, organization-based volunteering and informal volunteer work.[62]

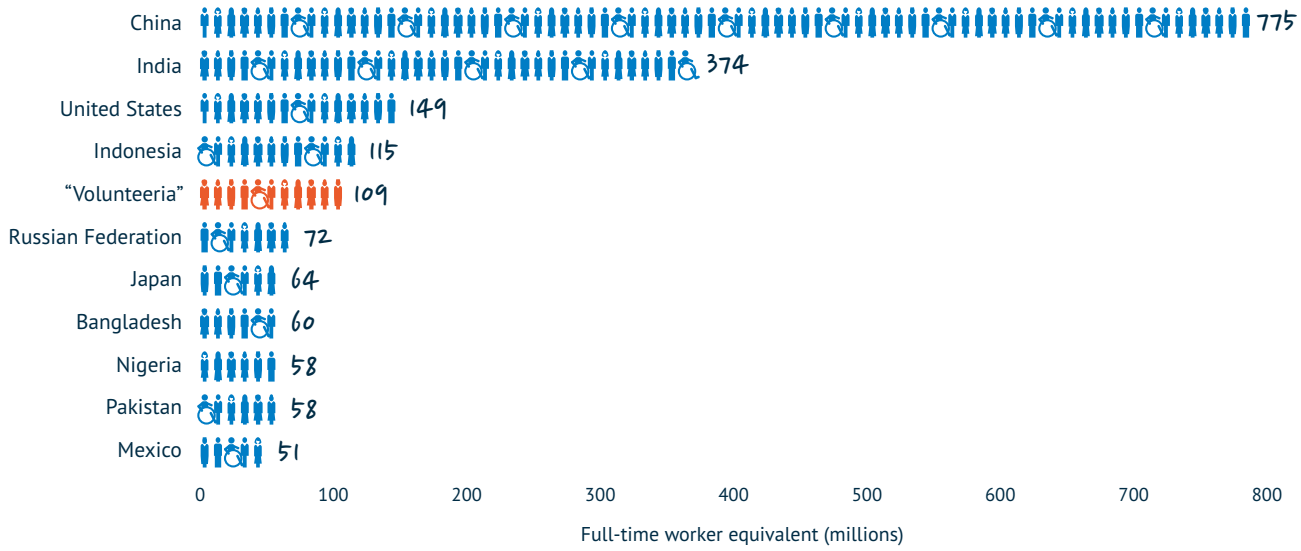
Although the figures presented in this report go much further than previous estimates, more research is needed on the factors and variables influencing volunteering rates and the breakdown of formal and informal volunteering across different contexts. Capturing informal volunteering has additional complexities. Nonetheless, while serious limitations remain, the available data provide rich insights into global volunteering patterns that have crucial policy and practice implications.

→ Rates of volunteerism across regions, countries and groups

The most comprehensive estimate of global volunteering today, produced as background research for this report, puts the global informal and formal volunteer workforce at 109 million full-time equivalent workers.[63,64] If these full-time volunteer workers constituted a country, the workforce of "Volunteeria" would be the fifth largest in the world (figure 1.2) – roughly equivalent to the number of employed people in Indonesia. Looked at another way, the full-time equivalent size of this global volunteer workforce exceeds that of many major global industries.[65]

Figure 1.2

The global volunteer workforce exceeds the number of people employed in more than half of the 10 most populous countries, 2016

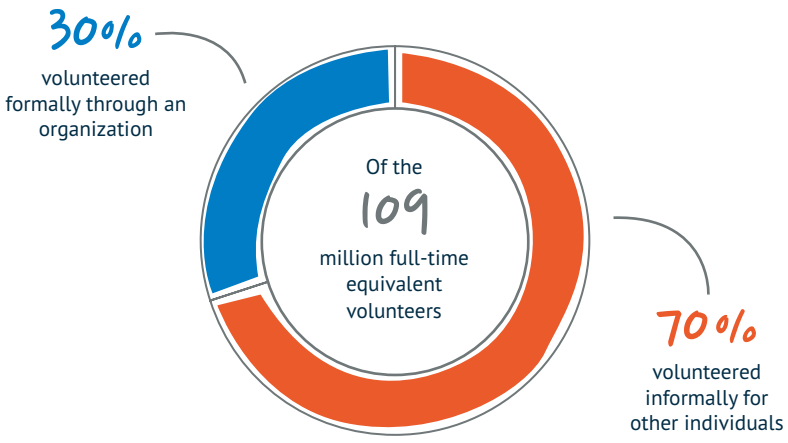


Source: UNV 2018a

In terms of composition, some 70 per cent of global volunteer activity occurs through informal (direct person-to-person) engagement with people outside the volunteer's household, while 30 per cent takes place formally through non-profit organizations or various associations (figure 1.3). Accordingly, much of the focus of the qualitative research for this report was on local and informal volunteering, which was prioritized by communities themselves but is largely under-represented in data and research on volunteering.

Figure 1.3

Majority of volunteering globally is informal



Source: UNV 2018a

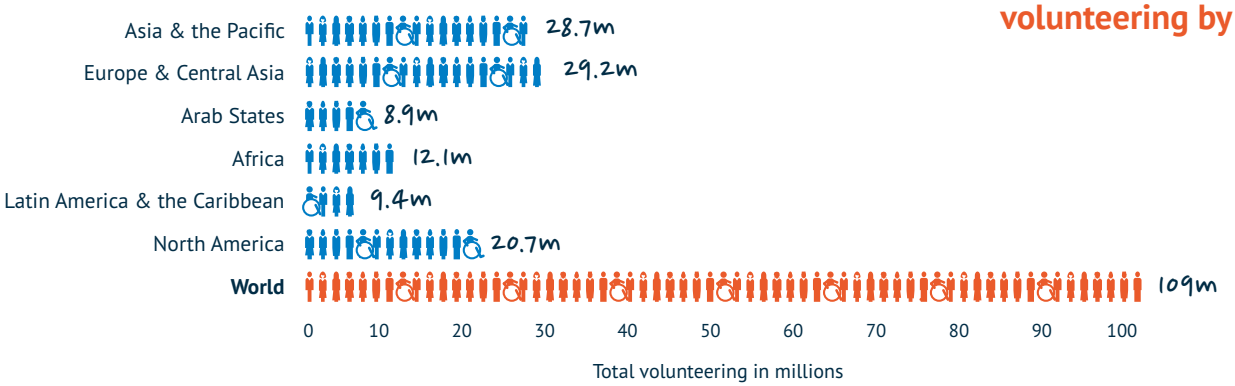
Although volunteering is universal, the form of people's participation depends on such variables as location, gender and age. A range of factors may limit or enhance people's opportunities and capacities to participate in both informal and formal volunteerism depending on who they are and the environment in which they live. For example, in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries factors including educational attainment, marital status and age all influence formal volunteering rates.[66] Underpinned by structures and processes that facilitate the engagement of volunteers, time-use data indicate that both informal and formal volunteering may compete for time with other activities, such as paid work, leisure and studies.[67]

ESTIMATES OF VOLUNTEERING BY REGION AND COUNTRY

Global data on volunteering reveal regional variations in volunteer participation rates and in the share of informal and formal volunteering. Figure 1.4 sets out the full-time equivalent volunteers per region from nearly 29 million in Asia and the Pacific to around 9 million each in the Arab States and Latin America and the Caribbean. There is a relative lack of volunteerism data from lower-income contexts and additional complexities in capturing the full range of informal volunteering. Noting this relative lack of data, the living conditions of people in many lower-income countries also necessarily put more demands on their time. People in low-income countries devote at least a third more of their time to earning a living than those in high-income countries.[68] They also spend more time waiting for services, getting to work and travelling to volunteer activities. However, the relationship between volunteering and available leisure time is complex, as the data below on male and female participation rates suggest.

Figure **1.4**

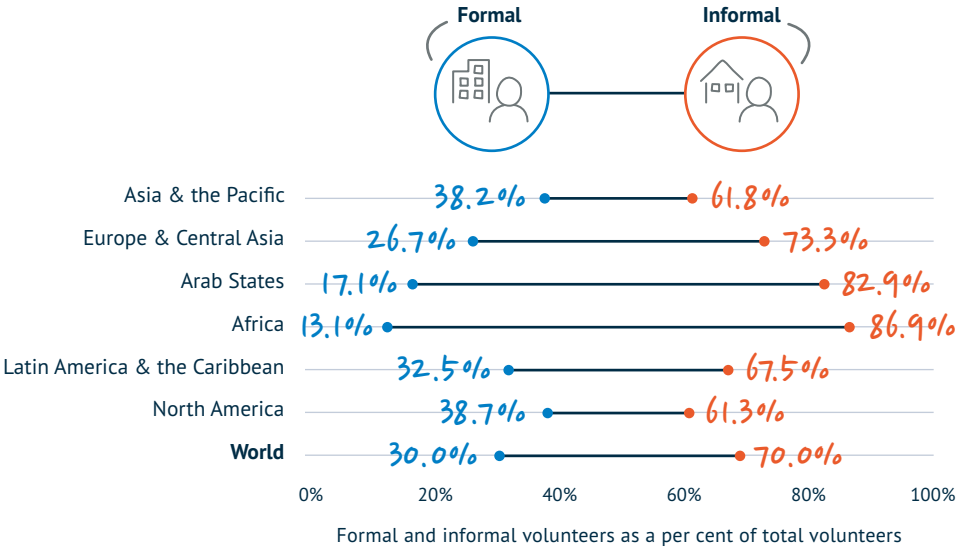
Total full-time equivalent volunteering by region



The form and extent of volunteering also vary by context. For instance, although informal volunteering exceeds formal volunteering in all regions, it accounts for nearly 90 per cent of volunteer activity in Africa but closer to 60 per cent in North America and Asia and the Pacific regions (figure 1.5). Participation in formal (organization-based) volunteering is likely affected by the number of organizations mobilizing volunteers in a country as well as by differences in institutional arrangements.[69] Higher-income countries tend to have a greater concentration of formal voluntary organizations and consequently more opportunities for people to participate in this way.[70]

Figure 1.5

Informal volunteering exceeds formal volunteering in all regions



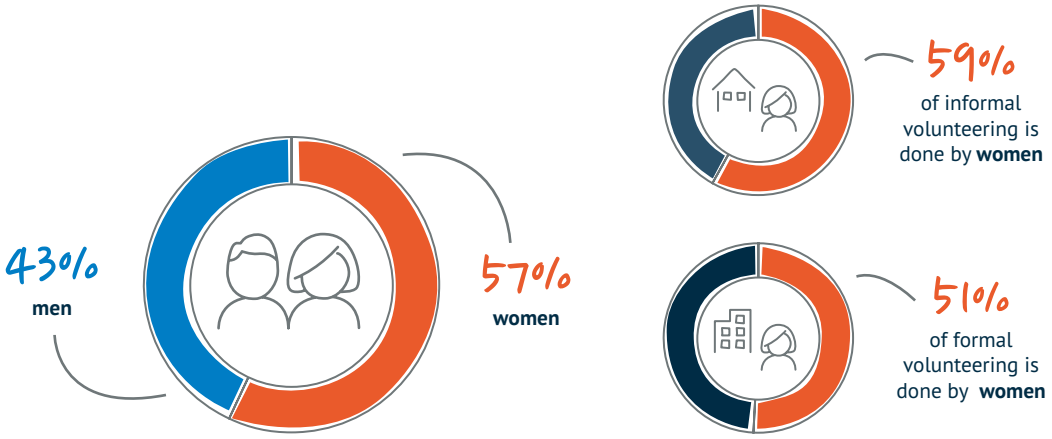
Formal and informal volunteers as a per cent of total volunteers

ESTIMATES OF VOLUNTEERING BY SEX

The sex of volunteers is one of the only reliable demographic variables for which data is available for cross-national disaggregation. Formal volunteering is fairly evenly distributed between the sexes (51 per cent women and 49 per cent men), which up-ends the belief still held by many people that more women than men volunteer through organizations.[71] Informal volunteering, however, has higher female participation rates globally. Since informal volunteering accounts for the majority of voluntary efforts in all regions and women account for the larger share of informal voluntary action, women constitute a larger proportion of volunteering overall – nearly 57 per cent (figure 1.6).

Figure 1.6

Women take on the majority of all volunteering globally



Women take on 57% of all volunteering globally

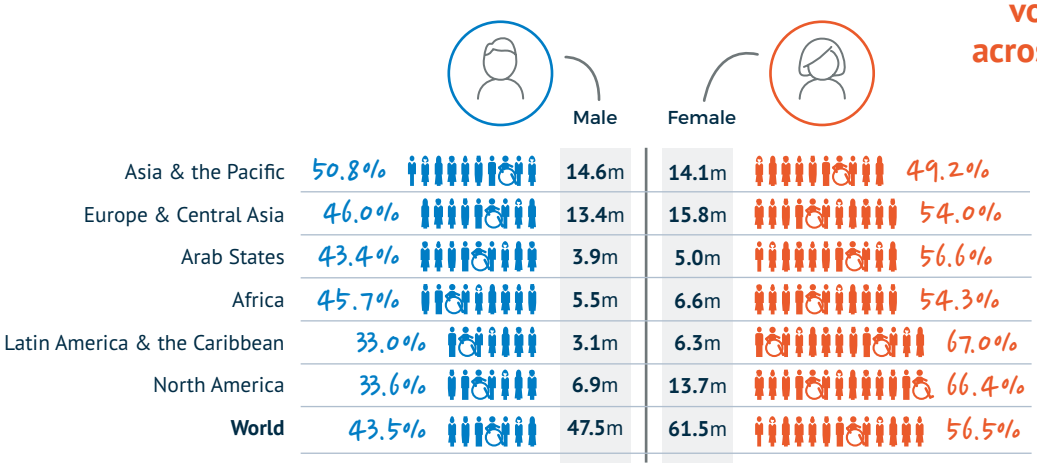
Globally, formal volunteering is more evenly distributed between the sexes than informal volunteering

Source: UNV 2018a

Regionally there is wide variation in terms of women's participation in volunteering. Female participation is highest in Latin America and the Caribbean at 67 per cent and lowest in Asia and the Pacific where women and men have more equal participation rates (Figure 1.7).

Figure 1.7

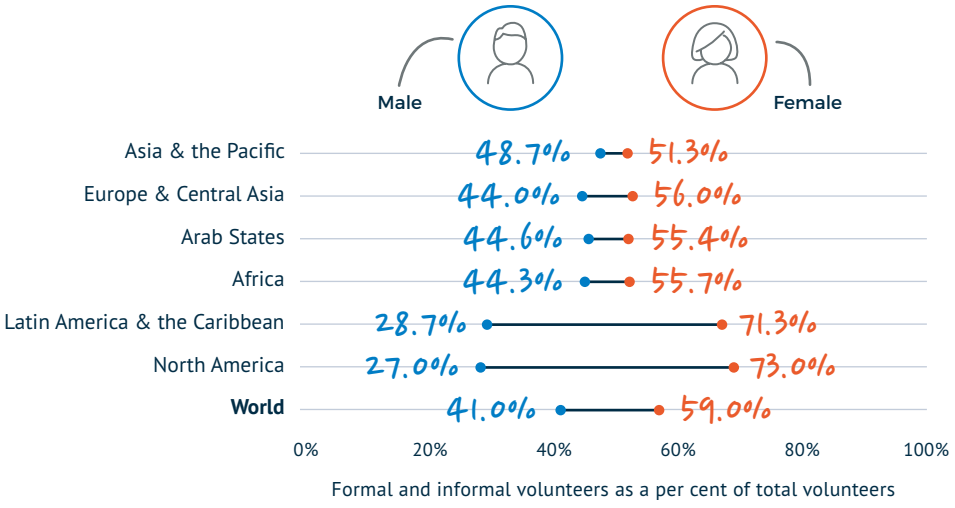
Women's share of total volunteering is higher across all regions except Asia and the Pacific



Considering informal volunteering, women take a larger share of informal voluntary action across all regions, accounting for nearly 60 per cent worldwide (figure 1.8). In North America and Latin America and the Caribbean women undertake more than 70 per cent of all informal volunteering. As discussed further in chapters 2 and 3, these findings bring to light the amount and type of volunteering women do and have implications for the ways in which volunteerism can reinforce or challenge gender roles and the social, political and economic inequalities faced by women.

Figure 1.8

Women take on the majority share of informal volunteering across all regions



VOLUNTEERISM AND STATISTICAL PRODUCTION IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

ISABEL SCHMIDT DIRECTOR, STATISTICS SOUTH AFRICA

Tshepiso steps back and admires his handiwork. As part of his contribution to Mandela Day, he has painted the interior walls of a corrugated iron shack that serves as a crèche for young children in an informal settlement in Johannesburg. In the spirit of ubuntu,[a] he regularly ferries his elderly parents, aunts and uncles to hospital or assists them with shopping. Just last weekend he repaired a broken kitchen cabinet door for his neighbour, Mrs Potts.

Enabling people such as Tshepiso to drive their own development priorities and agenda for change is one of the cornerstones of sustainable development. An active civil society is an essential component of a cohesive and well-functioning state. By encouraging an active citizenry, the state can potentially achieve more, using less financial resources, and also achieve greater social cohesion in the process. Volunteerism asks: how can I make a difference in my extended family, in my community, in my country and at a global level?

According to the Volunteer Activity Survey[b] conducted every four years by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), the number of South Africans doing volunteer work increased from 1.3 million in 2010 to 2.2 million in 2014. The latter figure represents 5.8 per cent of the South African population aged 15 years and older. The average annual number of hours per volunteer was 277, and their efforts were valued at R9.8 billion (USD0.8 billion). How comparable are these statistics with estimates produced in other countries? And can everything that Tshepiso does for others, without remuneration, be considered volunteer services?

As these questions demonstrate, statistical standards and definitions are essential to the task. StatsSA defines a volunteer as "a person aged 15 years and older who did any unpaid non-compulsory work", where unpaid non-compulsory work is defined as "time an individual gave without pay through an organization or directly for others outside their own household in the four weeks preceding the survey". Therefore all of Tshepiso's most recent activities that were not remunerated are included, with the exception of those done for his elderly parents. They are excluded because they live in the same household as Tshepiso.

The potential for discrepancy in standards and comparability across countries is around how voluntary work for the household and/or related households is defined. In the African context, where aunts and uncles are often considered as mothers and fathers, it is difficult to pinpoint where "related household" starts and stops – does it include all blood relatives, regardless of how far removed? StatsSA overcame this dilemma by including unpaid non-compulsory work done in all households except a person's own household.

Another potential point of divergence in international comparability is the issue of reimbursements received towards the coverage of costs whether these constitute payment within a definition of unpaid work. According to the ILO definition,[c] only moneys received that amount to more than one third of local market wages are considered remuneration rather than cost coverage. But in the absence of clear national payment standards or detailed income classifications for various activities, the data collection process is more complex and may result in inconsistent statistical standards within and across countries.

The ILO standards adopted at the 2013 International Conference of Labour Statisticians provide an important starting point for internationally comparable statistics on volunteering. However, more qualitative and quantitative research is needed to develop our concepts and tools particularly to reflect manifestations of volunteering particularly in Africa and the global South. As well as the issues identified above, there is also a need to standardize survey recall periods and ensure coverage of informal volunteering in all contexts. Working together with the ILO and UN Volunteers, StatsSA will continue to share our experiences to enable the standards to evolve.

a. A social philosophy prevalent in Southern Africa described as: "the capacity to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity in the interest of building and maintaining community". Nussbaum, B. (2003). *Ubuntu*: Reflections of a South African on our common humanity. *Reflections* 4(4):21–26.
b. Volunteer Activities Survey (2015). The Volunteer Activities Survey is conducted by Statistics South Africa every four years as a module attached to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey.
c. International Labour Organization, *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work* (2011).

→ Diverse trends and patterns shape expressions of volunteerism

People's volunteering evolves in line with a range of context-specific influencing factors, from demographic changes in the population to newly available technologies. Many countries with ageing populations are finding new resources and challenges for volunteering.[72,73] Likewise, increasing youth populations are prompting some countries (particularly low- and middle-income countries) to emphasize volunteering as a means of constructively engaging young people.[74,75] In some countries, formal volunteering is becoming more episodic than the regular and predictable volunteering of the past, influenced by factors such as work and leisure.[76]

> "Because of the crisis, volunteerism is considered to be a luxury today. You can think of it as an application of the Maslow pyramid. People try to cover first their primary needs. They try to have food to eat, they try to find a job, they try to support their families… Therefore, the need to help other people without receiving any kind of help by the community does not come first, and this has a direct negative impact on volunteerism.
>
> ▶ Research participant, Greece, SWVR field research

The rapid rise of smart, mobile, crowdsourced and other new technologies continues to bring sweeping changes to how volunteers and voluntary organizations engage. As the 2011 SWVR recognized, "technological developments are opening up spaces for people to volunteer in ways that have no parallel in history".[77] Since then, the uptake of these technologies, including across low- and middle-income countries, has accelerated. Today, for many volunteers both formal and informal the use of technology in some aspect of their volunteering is no longer a convenience but an everyday necessity. This creates exciting new prospects for volunteering. It gives organizations powerful new tools to mobilize, organize,

Volunteer voices: Rohini

Volunteers working online use geospatial mapping for emergency response efforts

As a geospatial specialist, during emergencies I volunteer to map affected areas using satellite data.

On 20 Sep 2017, at close to midnight, I received an email:

"Dear GISCorps Volunteers,
…seeking assistance for conducting damage assessment of … health center locations affected by Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico…If you are interested and available, please send an email.."

I immediately responded, as did five other volunteers from different corners of the world. Working together through an online group we scanned through miles and miles of data in just a few days – which would have taken weeks to gather from the field. Getting this kind of information at the right time can fast-track recovery efforts and even save lives. Online volunteering is a cost-effective and efficient way to get the important information from the satellites to the people on the ground. It also gives me a way to use my technical skills meaningfully and to be part of a bigger picture. I believe that future disaster response and recovery efforts will increasingly rely upon remotely sensed data – such as from drones. Analysing this information through crowd-sourced geospatial mapping platforms, volunteers like me can play a significant role.

Volunteer training session for the UN Climate Conference 2017 in Bonn, Germany; 650 volunteers supported the event (UNV, 2017).

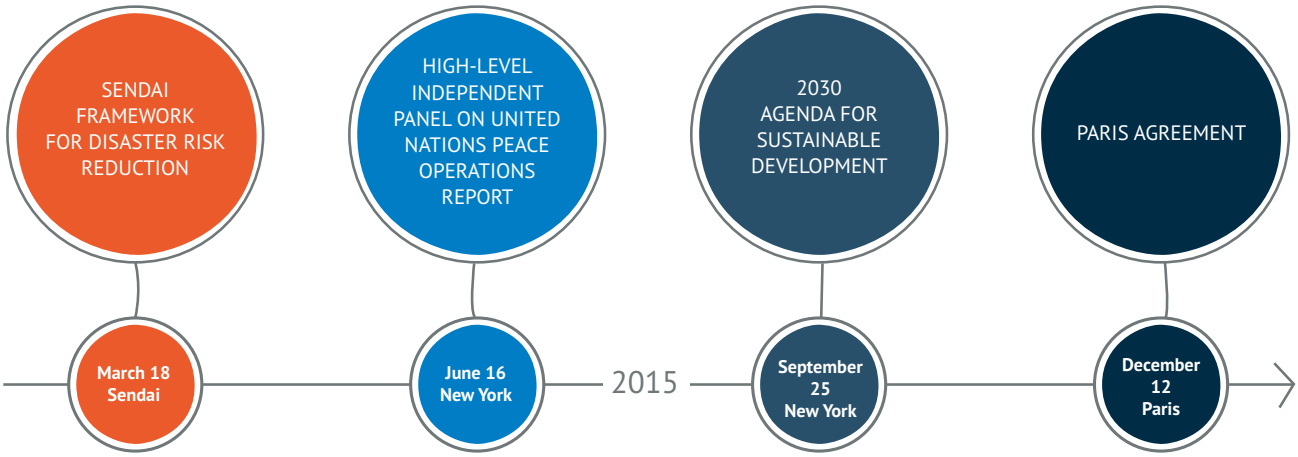
incentivize and evaluate volunteers while also offering volunteers new opportunities for agency and feedback. It also enables new forms of volunteering such as online volunteering and micro-volunteering that are disconnected from specific times and locations.

These developments, a key trend in the networked age of humanitarian aid,[78,79] offer innovative ways for volunteers to enhance community resilience by widening social connections. However, while presenting exciting opportunities for some people who have found it difficult to volunteer in the past, for example, persons with disabilities, these technologies raise new barriers for others. A digital divide persists in most contexts, and as technology use in volunteering spreads, it will affect volunteering opportunities for marginalized and vulnerable groups.[80] In many countries, men, urban residents and young people are more likely to be online than women, rural dwellers and the elderly. Volunteer-involving organizations need to be sensitive to the issues of unequal access to technology while adapting its use to local needs, cultural contexts and technology infrastructure.

The post-2015 development frameworks, which emphasize new partnerships and local participation, promote volunteering and people-centred approaches to development (figure 1.9).[81] There is more emphasis on the normative values of volunteerism and a recognition that a top-down, uniform volunteer infrastructure does not fit all contexts.[82] A variety of peace and development actors from national governments and local authorities to corporate leaders, humanitarian aid agencies, NGOs and community-based organizations are partnering with volunteers to deliver on their objectives.

Figure 1.9

Volunteerism and citizen engagement are common threads across major international frameworks and processes in 2015



The Sendai Framework states that governments should engage with volunteers in the design and implementation of policy and plans.

The High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations report notes the role of volunteers in strengthening engagement with national actors, community liaison and national capacity development.

The UN post-2015 Summit adopts the 2030 Agenda and 17 SDGs. Volunteer groups are mentioned among the means of implementation of the new agenda.

While not explicitly mentioning volunteers, the **Paris Agreement** recognizes that participatory approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation are important to track progress, hold stakeholders to account, and fill urgent knowledge gaps to inform decision-making and raise awareness.

Sources: United Nations 2015a; Ilitchev 2015; UNGA 2015b; United Nations 2015b

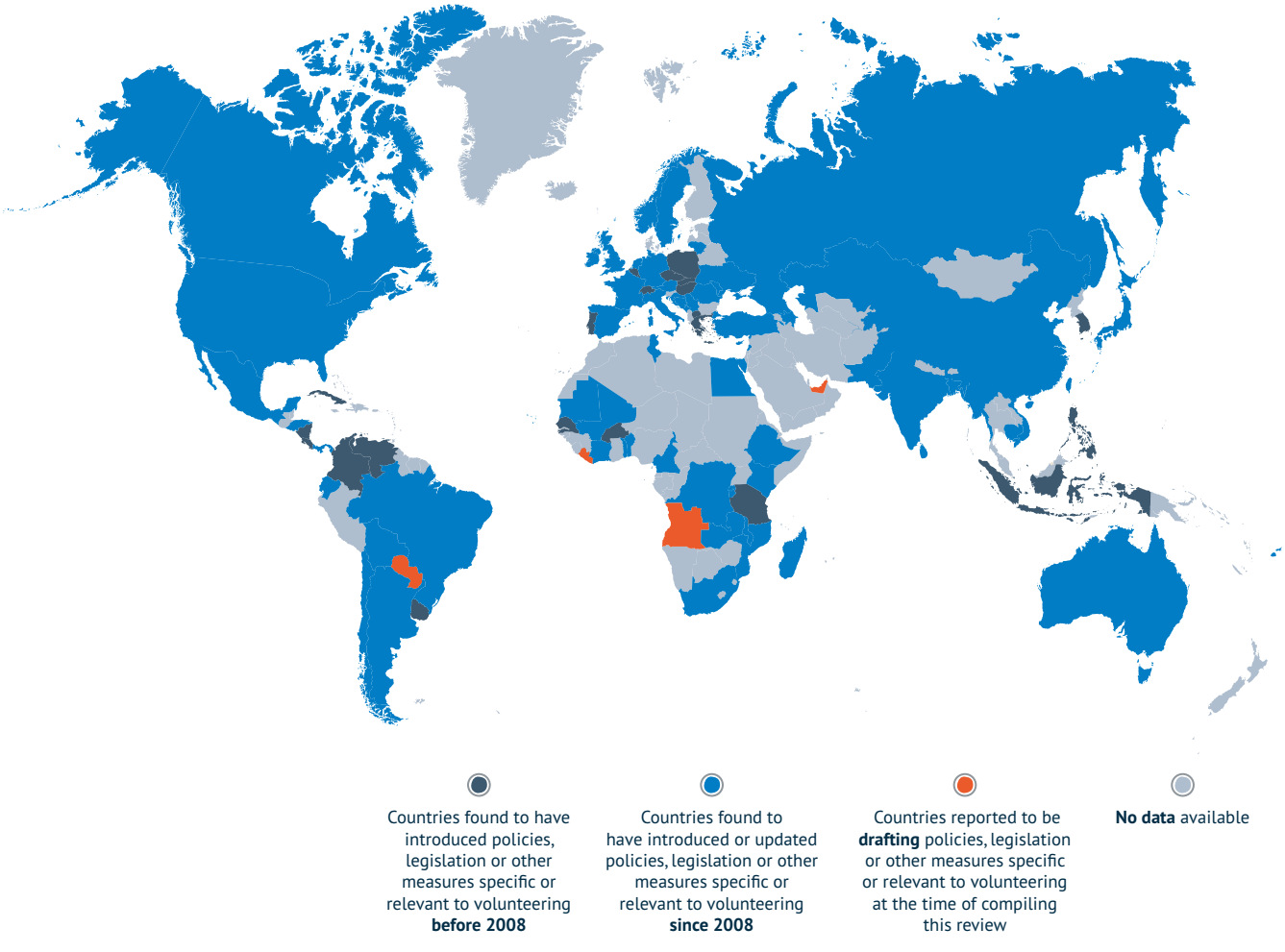
While informal volunteering continues to be the most common form of voluntary activity, formal volunteering has grown as new actors have emerged. Low- and middle-income countries have seen the establishment of new programmes and schemes, due in part to greater recognition of the added value of volunteering to domestic development efforts[83] and the continuing spread of policies and legislation promoting volunteering (see annex 3). New opportunities have also arisen, particularly in middle-income countries, to satisfy the demands of increasingly wealthy societies to formally volunteer, and as volunteering is included in the expanding and diversifying overseas development cooperation emerging from the global South, including South-South Cooperation.[84]

Public and private investments in volunteering are both responding to and shaping these global trends. Globally the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) remains one of the largest providers of formal opportunities to volunteer, with around 14 million active volunteers in 2016.[85] Private sector actors continue to become more prominent in volunteering[86] as an increasing number of global businesses see volunteering as a core component of corporate social responsibility.[87] Meanwhile, the academic community is producing a growing volume of research and evidence on volunteering – although questions remain over the reliability of data and large gaps persist for evidence on volunteering in developing countries.[88]

Legislation and policies remain important to promote volunteering, and a United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme review found at least 72 countries had introduced or amended or were in the process of drafting, policies, legislation or other measures specific or relevant to volunteering between May 2008 and May 2018 (figure 1.10). However, while in many countries policies and laws have had positive effects, in others they have not promoted all aspects of volunteerism – for example, by neglecting or restricting freedom of expression and association or self-organization among all groups of people. There is therefore growing concern that certain applications of policies and laws related to volunteering, and in particular overregulation, narrows access, shrinks diversity and restricts civic space.[89] These issues are further discussed in the analysis of the findings emerging from the 15 communities that were the subject of the research for this report.

Figure **1.10**

Global coverage of volunteering policies and legislation, 2018



Source: UNV 2018b

Volunteers provide support to visitors in Trafalgar Square, London, United Kingdom (Greater London Authority, 2016).

What do these global estimates and trends tell us about volunteerism in 2018? People are volunteering at scale – although access and participation differ by context, gender and other less visible influences. Informal action is the most common form of volunteering globally and was a major feature in all communities participating in the field research for this report. Ultimately, differences between formal and informal volunteering rates can have implications for community resilience, as discussed in the following chapters. Formal volunteering may be more likely to facilitate connections with actors outside communities and the partnerships and resources they may offer, while informal volunteering builds on principles of self-organization and community cohesion, offering maximum flexibility and opportunities for innovation.

The updated data on volunteerism show a clear gender divide, with women taking on the majority share of volunteering. Women are particularly overrepresented in informal volunteering, offering insights that can inform discussions on the gender-related findings evident throughout this report. Demographic changes, new technologies, people's livelihoods and the policies and procedures of institutional actors all feature as key determinants of voluntary action.

Recognizing that volunteering is prevalent in communities struggling to cope, what does this look like in real terms? As a social behaviour most strongly manifested at the informal local community level, how are vulnerable communities organizing to deal with the threats they face each day? The analysis in this report looks at how the distinctive contributions of local volunteerism, in collaboration with external actors, enhance or inhibit community resilience in contexts of instability, disaster and conflict. The value of local volunteers' capacities for human connections and self-organization is further illustrated in the next chapter.

IT HAS TO BE US:

LOCAL

VOLUNTEERISM IN COMMUNITIES UNDER STRAIN

"Community volunteers were the only ones putting their hands up... A lot (of volunteers) didn't want to be part of that. But there were also a lot who said, 'No-one else will do this. It has to be us. This is our community.'"

– **Red Cross aid worker**, IFRC, Global Review of Volunteering

Volunteer leaders talk to a 2018 SWVR researcher about how they address challenges in their community in Guatemala (UNV/Mariano Salazar, 2018).

2

The battle for resilience will be won or lost with communities. Drawing on original field research and secondary sources, this chapter investigates how the distinctive characteristics of local volunteerism, particularly the ability to build relationships and self-organize, expand or diminish communities' capacities to cope with shocks and stresses. Volunteerism is a principal mechanism through which individuals and households connect and organize with others as part of a resilient system. The relational qualities of volunteerism shape options and opportunities for managing risk, particularly in the most isolated contexts. Yet because volunteerism is based on human relationships, it has its own challenges rooted in local power structures and social inequalities. Exploring these distinctive characteristics of voluntary action illustrates the strengths and limitations of local volunteerism in bolstering community resilience.

For much of the past half-century, efforts to reduce global instability and manage risk have largely followed centralized models that emphasize technical expertise and the coordination of actors external to local communities.[90,91] These models have viewed local actors as recipients of services rather than as key drivers and participants in reducing risk. More recent efforts to strengthen community resilience have acknowledged the value of participation by a range of traditionally disempowered stakeholders, recognizing local actors as the starting point for community resilience. Such approaches view people not only as vulnerable and at-risk but also as capable of self-organizing and leading efforts to improve community resilience,[92] drawing on local expertise and skills, human agency and ownership and empowerment to do so.[93]

> "We repair our road by ourselves. We start with our own strength and resources instead of waiting for support from outside. If we wait for support, it takes a long time. We just want to solve our problem now.
>
> ▶ Focus group participant, Tanzania, SWVR field research

The 2030 Agenda emphasizes a people-centred approach to development. At the same time, the growing influence of major emerging economies and of new partnerships among low- and middle-income countries is shifting the focus from external aid to development cooperation for strengthened domestic capacities. A new emphasis on national ownership and leadership seeks to align external assistance with national frameworks, policies and plans and to situate development processes and accountabilities within a wider social contract. Yet while localization discussions often focus on national ownership, less attention is paid to community-level ownership. Fully valuing local solutions means focusing on community self-reliance, social justice and decision-making; facilitating rights and participation; reducing inequalities; and welcoming continual feedback and course correction.

Recognizing the value of local capacities mobilized through volunteering, this chapter explores its shape in communities at the frontline of disaster and risk. Drawing on the field research, it looks closely at the top two distinctive characteristics of volunteerism highlighted by communities themselves: the human-centred connections and self-organization of local volunteers – qualities that can both help and hinder community resilience. Finally, it balances these contributions with the limitations of voluntary action, particularly when communities are isolated from wider groups of actors within the resilience systems.

Figure **2.1**

Scope of Chapter 2

How do volunteerism and resilience interact at the community level?

Expressions of local volunteering in the community

Local volunteering, both formal and informal, encompasses a remarkably broad array of activities to support community resilience. As detailed in the 2011 and 2015 SWVRs, these activities range from service delivery to social advocacy and participation in processes that challenge poor governance.[94,95] Local voluntary action typically manifests as voluntary cooperation among people, without reliance on centralized authorities or explicit external command. It depends on the freedom and ability to assemble, to organize and prioritize, and to mobilize others based on shared values.

Field research for this report revealed diverse examples of local people voluntarily coming together to prepare for and cope with conflict and crises – for example, by building awareness, by supplying local security and protection, by planting and protecting marshes and forests, by strengthening infrastructure (roads, bridges, water drainage systems, water supply) and by otherwise buttressing their communities against anticipated threats (figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2

Number of field research communities where different types of volunteer activity are taking place

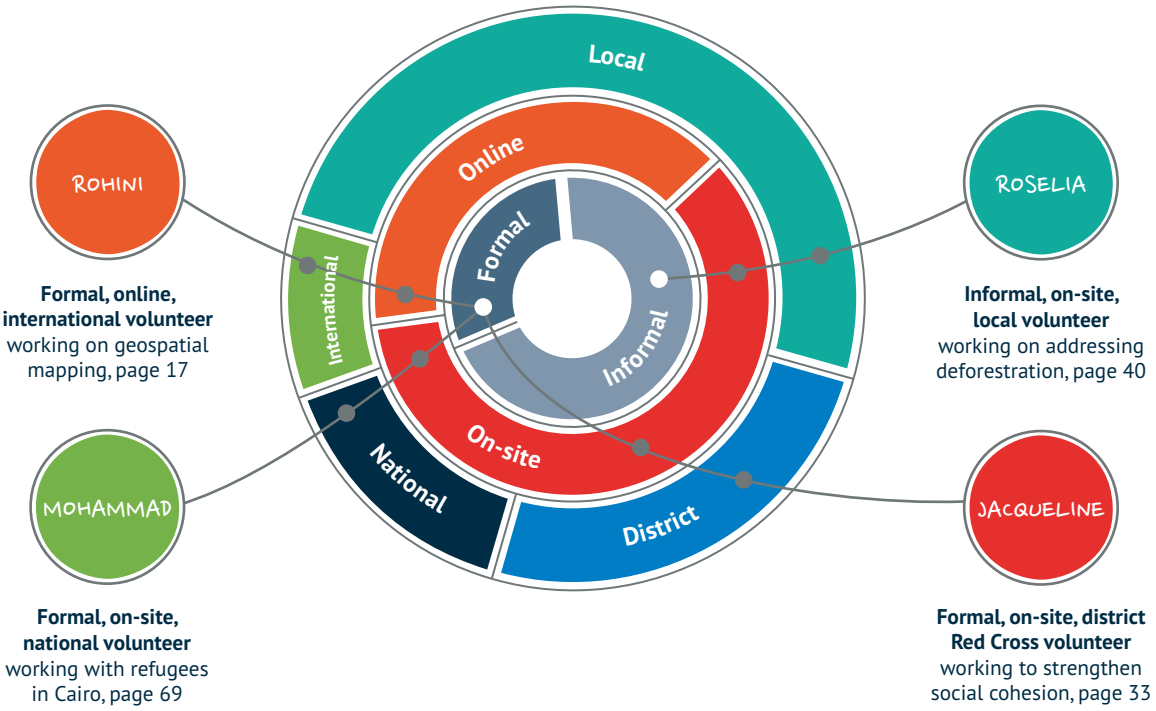
The bubbles represent how many of the 15 SWVR research communities reported volunteer activity corresponding to a sector or type.

> "During the rainy season, the canal is often destroyed by the flooding so we get together to help each other to repair it… If the volunteers did not perform these activities, they would not be provided for by any other actor. Only our community knows the reality and the problems we have to deal with… we cannot take the liberty to wait for external people to bring solutions to problems that are ours.
>
> ▶ Focus group participant, Madagascar, SWVR field research

Often motivated by solidarity and mutual aid, people living under conditions of vulnerability are assuming much of the responsibility for the welfare of their community by staking their survival on shared voluntary contributions. With, and often without, a formal shift of responsibility, power or resources from higher authorities, local volunteers are helping their communities cope with stresses and spontaneously respond to shocks. When supported by freedom of association and freedom of expression, local volunteerism provides avenues for collective action to reinforce strengths and resources from within communities. Although local volunteering reflects diverse forms of expression, social action is at its core (figure 2.3).

Figure **2.3**

Different types and configurations of volunteerism in communities



COMMUNITIES BENEFIT DIFFERENTLY FROM FORMAL AND INFORMAL VOLUNTEERING

The diverse forms of volunteerism discussed in chapter 1 bring different strengths and challenges to community resilience. Although informal volunteers may affiliate with a formal organization or community structure, much local volunteering is spontaneous and informal, unmediated by an organization that may be able to coordinate larger-scale volunteer efforts.[96,97] Informal volunteering can draw on the power of human relationships to strengthen trust and social solidarity, enhance shared meaning within groups and lead to the types of collective action that communities often rely on in times of adversity.[98,99] Informal volunteerism was typically viewed by the field research communities as more flexible and responsive and better able to adapt to unexpected changes than formal volunteerism. Its reliance on informal bonds meant that volunteers were also free to exclude certain people from the benefits, reinforcing dynamics that may hold back development.[100,101]

Formal volunteering exposes communities to new organizational norms and values

Formal volunteering also takes place in local communities, but it is less common than informal volunteering, particularly in lower-income countries. The field research found that formal volunteering is more likely to challenge traditional cultural roles and responsibilities, especially those related to gender, and can expand leadership roles for women. Formal volunteering exposes communities to new organizational norms and values. It can open access to community networks, strengthen community capacity by training people in new skills, widen access to resources and enhance opportunities for employment, all of which can strengthen community resilience for the long term (box 2.1).[102] The associated value and benefits to volunteers are also often higher for formal volunteerism, in part because it is typically more visible and thus more valued.[103,104]

Both types of volunteering are important for building resilience, and both come with multiple constraints, from the weaker access to resources and influence over decision-making associated with informal volunteerism to the restrictive policies and norms associated with both local and external manifestations of formal volunteerism. These dynamics suggest that the shortcomings of local, informal voluntary action can be mitigated when local volunteering is complemented by more organized institutional responses.

Box **2.1**

Exchanging knowledge on gender-based violence in Myanmar

When external actors seek input from local volunteers, volunteers can contribute to the development of context-appropriate interventions for community resilience.

May Doe Kabar National Network of Rural Women, a network of women's groups in Myanmar funded by the United Nations Development Programme, gathered information on gender-based violence by partnering with the township-based organization Susee Ar Man and its extensive network of women volunteers. The volunteers used mobile phone apps to gather data from 912 women participating in Susee Ar Man groups. May Doe Kabar used the survey data to inform advocacy and action on gender-based violence within their states and regions, and Susee Ar Man and its volunteers identified the key issues and made recommendations to stakeholders on locally appropriate prevention and responses. This joint learning and exchange of information between local volunteers and external organizations resulted in interventions that respondents described as highly appropriate and effective under the local conditions.

Source: SWVR field research

A meeting of volunteer groups of garment factory workers in Bangladesh (Chris McMorrow, 2015).

> "Organized volunteerism is more impartial, because they do not care whether they know personally the beneficiary or not… we can rely on them to identify the most urgent needs and vulnerable persons and to act rapidly and in a fair way.
>
> ▶ Farmer, Burundi, SWVR field research

While formal volunteering generally represented a unidirectional transfer of skills, labour and resources, informal volunteering often embodied a more reciprocal form of giving and receiving

However, the distinction between organization-based and informal volunteerism is not always clear-cut, particularly at the community level. Much of the more formalized expression of voluntary action in the field research communities was self-organized. Volunteers who were not affiliated with formal organizations were sometimes coordinated in ways that straddled the line between organized and self-organized volunteerism. In addition, individuals may have multiple roles within a community that can make it harder to distinguish formal and informal volunteerism. For example, when local leaders organize community action it can be unclear whether they are acting in their formal administrative capacity or as a community member among peers.

COLLECTIVE FORMS OF LOCAL VOLUNTEERING ARE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH SOCIAL OBLIGATION

Respondents in the field research communities stressed that a key reason their communities are resilient is that people pull together to accomplish tasks that the government or other external actors have neglected. Community members volunteered their time, but they also often expected help in return, especially when they engaged in informal volunteering and collective action. One field research participant in Tanzania explained: "When I encounter people who need some support, I help him/her without hesitation. Because I know that I myself may also need support from others tomorrow". While formal volunteering generally represented a unidirectional transfer of skills, labour and resources, informal volunteering often embodied a more reciprocal form of giving and receiving.

Although this communal approach to volunteerism was associated with perceptions of community resilience, it was sometimes viewed as a burdensome expectation. Being constantly on the giving or the receiving end of support can lead to feelings of disempowerment, entitlement and alienation – to the detriment of social cohesion.[105,106] So while volunteerism as mutual aid can enhance social cohesion, it is embedded in survival strategies that may disproportionately burden those with less to give in return. At what point does community action shift from voluntary to coercive or exploitative, particularly for people with high livelihood opportunity costs associated with their participation? What is the relationship between self-organized volunteering and vulnerability? These issues are discussed later in the chapter.

Local volunteering was also associated with compulsory expressions of collective action. While compulsory actions fall outside the definition of volunteerism, these expressions of "volunteering" were mentioned so frequently in the field research that they warrant attention. Community members often differentiated between compulsory collective action and voluntary community work. They noted that people often participate in compulsory collective action out of fear of community censure or other penalties. People who failed to participate in such unpaid work were fined, shunned or denied access to collectively produced goods or services, such as new water sources or agricultural products.

> "There is a rule in the village: even if you do not want to volunteer to solve a problem, you will be forced to do it under pressure by neighbours.
>
> ▶ Focus group participant, Russia, SWVR field research

In contrast, participation in voluntary community work was viewed as intrinsically motivated, as a shared voluntary contribution to enhance the survival and collective welfare of the community. As a focus group participant in Burundi explained: "Compared to local authorities, volunteers are more efficient, because they have more freedom to decide what they do".

Understanding the different expressions of local volunteering is important for distinguishing it from other types of local and international development and humanitarian action. Several qualities of volunteering set it apart from other approaches to help communities cope with stress and shocks. Of these qualities, communities themselves highlighted volunteerism's contributions to relationship-building and self-organizing, explored in more detail in the next section.

→ What communities value: The distinctive contributions of local volunteering to resilience

The field research conducted for this report focused on communities' perceptions of volunteerism and its distinctive contributions to community resilience (figure 2.4). It revealed how, in difficult times, volunteering brings people in the community together to achieve shared goals, in the process strengthening solidarity and relational bonds and building trust. It also revealed that the self-organizing ability of volunteers was the most commonly noted characteristic among field research respondents, a finding that validates and augments prior evidence of the importance of self-organization for community resilience.

> "In times of stress, we share with each other, we help with finding solutions for each other. We're like family to each other. Some of us may be experienced in one thing, while the other is in another thing; we learn from each other's knowledge and experiences.
>
> ▶ Focus group participant, Netherlands, SWVR field research

Figure **2.4**

What communities value about volunteerism for resilience

Note: This treemap shows the two most frequently identified characteristics of volunteerism (and their components) by the research communities. For more details see table A7.2 in annex 7.

Source: SWVR field research

→ Distinctive characteristic 1: The human connections in voluntary action shape how communities cope with adversity

The human-centred connections inherent to local volunteerism are important to communities. The social interactions developed through shared voluntary action create solidarity or "power with others", as articulated by one community member in Myanmar which can enhance people's base of support and make them less vulnerable to the consequences of shocks and stresses. These relationships are also associated with building trust, a critical component of collective action and a self-organized reaction to situations of stress and strain.[107] These relational attributes of volunteering are an important distinguishing characteristic that contributes to building resilient communities. The ability of local volunteers to interact and support each other during stressful times is a prominent predictor of community resilience.[108] As a result, resilience is strongest when people are embedded in a web of diverse networks, relationships and connections that enable capacities and coping mechanisms that are unavailable when people act alone.

A volunteer health worker tends to a pregnant woman displaced by an earthquake in Ecuador (UNV, 2016).

Volunteerism is particularly effective in building social cohesion and strengthening solidarity within and between groups as well as in forming networks and relationships.[109,110] Extensive research has demonstrated how volunteering can create a virtual circle of mutual trust and social cohesion through shared identity, location, experience and motivation.[111,112] Volunteering allows community members to support each other emotionally in times of crisis, offering encouragement and providing opportunities to meet social needs. Volunteering can enable community members to build relationships with other stakeholders by connecting them with wider support networks. Horizontal local networks developed through volunteering expand people's access to resources and information in times of stress.[113]

Depending largely on how the relationships are structured, volunteering has the potential to facilitate or block the sharing and distribution of information and learning needed to solve problems, and thus it may enhance or inhibit community resilience.

"

Because I know my neighbours very well and we talk a lot about our circumstances, I would call a group of mutual friends, neighbours or relatives and start a lending circuit that my neighbour in need benefits from first. I call people monthly at the time of gathering the money to make sure that everyone gets her share of time.

▶ Female research participant, Egypt, SWVR field research

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THAT STRENGTHEN TRUST AND SOCIAL COHESION

The field research emphasized the capacity of volunteering to enhance solidarity through mutual assistance. It also identified the value of having a shared vision as a basis for action, particularly in lower-income and rural contexts (box 2.2). Motivations for action through volunteering were often associated with local concepts, such as the Nguni Bantu notion of *ubuntu*, or humanity towards others, which describes the behaviour that reflects our common humanity. Similar concepts include *fihavanana* (Malagasy), or recognizing that all people are kin and rely on each other for support; *solidaridad* (Spanish), meaning working together for the common good; and *ujamaa* or *harambee* (Swahili), meaning pulling together to solve a community problem. In one field research community in Russia, "patriotic volunteering" was seen as bringing people together across ethnic and religious lines and expressing a "modern" form of citizenship. These concepts, which emphasize inclusiveness, are central to communities' perceptions of resilience. When groups share a strong sense of solidarity, volunteering provides a mechanism for managing and sharing risk among peers.

When groups share a strong sense of solidarity, volunteering provides a mechanism for managing and sharing risk among peers

> "We live according to the saying: 'Stone are those united, and sand those that move apart'.
>
> ▶ Local volunteer, Madagascar, SWVR field research

Shared experiences when facing adversity can also build trust. Trust is enhanced through repeated interactions as people labour together to accomplish shared goals.[114,115] But mutual trust is also needed to motivate people to voluntarily take shared responsibility for collective decision-making in times of stress.[116,117] Getting people from divided groups to cooperate in volunteer efforts is difficult when the basic elements of trust have not first been established or restored.[118] Thus trust is both the outcome and the foundation of collective action.

Box **2.2**

Expressing solidarity by mobilizing volunteers in Darfur

In many of the field research communities, volunteerism was not discussed as an individual activity but rather as a collective social activity rooted in solidarity. In Sudan, *nafeer*, or "a call to mobilize", is a basic social activity that relies on collective volunteer engagement. It is used to muster help with planting and harvesting crops during high seasons or drought, quickly mobilize militias to protect harvests from bandits, reconstruct mosques and community buildings destroyed during conflict and meet similar joint needs. These activities, not easily accomplished alone, rely on collective volunteerism during times of peak stress. For instance, without the correct equipment, harvesting crops within the necessary timeframe would be a monumental task for a single farmer. However, when people come together, harvesting is more productive because crops are gathered more quickly and losses are reduced during periods of drought or poor weather. Shared trust, social cohesion and a sense of solidarity are critical to establishing the type of collective and reciprocal volunteerism needed to make such calls to mobilize successful.

Source: SWVR field research

"

After completing the project, many residents now have confidence that their community can be improved through their own contributions. This is partially due to their trust of the volunteer group members.

▶ Focus group participant, China, SWVR field research

Voluntary action can enhance community resilience in difficult times by bringing together people from different ethnicities, political parties and socio-economic positions to work together to achieve shared goals. As people in the field research communities from diverse groups volunteered alongside other trusted community members, their interactions enhanced feelings of mutual understanding. For instance, volunteers in Burundi helped people from different groups come together by using shared livelihoods as an entry point for strengthening trust. Volunteers from Christian Orthodox and Muslim communities in Russia united in their shared desire to provide mutual assistance. These interactions not only helped maintain peace between diverse groups but also changed perceptions among bystanders, who saw what people could achieve by working together.

The social interactions embedded in volunteerism can also redefine relationships between groups that have become divided, bringing them together in the pursuit of a common cause.[119] Such relational contacts are particularly important in building community resilience following conflict, which polarizes people and weakens social bonds. For instance, Christian and Muslim volunteers in the Philippines organized and implemented interfaith environmental protection activities. By working together, the mostly young volunteers from different cultures and faith traditions learned more about each other and increased their understanding of people of other cultural and religious backgrounds. As one of them noted: "There was one thing that we could work on together. It was an eye-opener for us." Comments like this are consistent with prior research, which has found a positive correlation between people's participation in volunteer organizations and their perceptions of interpersonal trust.[120]

Volunteer voices: JACQUELINE

Overcoming community differences through volunteering

I finished full-time education two years ago and decided to volunteer with the local group of the Red Cross in the town I grew up in. We support the community by doing work such as distributing food, seeds and clothes to vulnerable households. I have learned a lot from volunteering – not only gaining skills but also learning more about the community in which I grew up. I love to witness innovative people organizing to help each other. But my main gratification is the feeling I get each time someone says "thank you for what you are doing" and then enrols themselves as a volunteer. Volunteering is contagious!

I think that volunteerism is a wonderful opportunity for people to build peace at the same time as building resilience. In acting together, we learn how to overcome ethnic and political differences. Previously, people only helped family or friends, but through volunteering community members learn to help each other, including people they do not know. This strengthens communities. I am particularly proud to see that youth and women form the largest cohort of volunteers. I think that this is because women and youth are more vulnerable so they are often more aware of issues and the need to help.

People with shared backgrounds and circumstances can also benefit from the trust and cohesion developed through voluntary action.[121] The collaborative work of self-organized local volunteer groups strengthens shared bonds. In the field research communities, the connections that emerged from volunteerism were described as particularly valuable for women and marginalized groups, who banded together to meet shared needs that were often overlooked by more powerful, mainstream groups.

The social cohesion nurtured through volunteerism was reflected in volunteers' motivations and commitment. Furthermore, given the agency inherent in volunteerism, people who chose to volunteer were also often described by others as selfless, empathic and communicative. As a community member in Bolivia emphasized, the value of volunteers is far more than their capacity to engage with local communities: "They themselves are the community". Their embeddedness as members of the community feeds into their motivation and commitment to help others.

> "There is a greater commitment because…we live here, and we look after our neighbours…so we have a stronger bond and commitment.
>
> ▶ Local volunteer, Bolivia, SWVR field research

Volunteering can strengthen a community's social capital, weaving a durable network of human relationships that enable new capacities beyond those possible when people act alone.[122] Prior research has shown that people with strong social support networks are more than twice as likely as people with weaker social supports to respond to emergencies.[123] Volunteering can also strengthen community identification, which enhances the likelihood that communities will come together and rebuild after conflict or disaster strikes.[124] Strong relationships are associated with enhanced mutual help and voluntary assistance during adverse times, including help with caring for children, providing emotional support, seeking shelter, obtaining medical help and gathering information (box 2.3).[125,126]

Box **2.3**

German volunteers welcome and resettle refugees

Volunteers across the world are responding to unprecedented levels of forced displacement and migration. In Germany alone, more than 1.4 million displaced people have applied for asylum since 2014. Many Germans are volunteering across towns and cities in response to immigrants' needs. These volunteers treat new arrivals with empathy and extend a human touch, something that is often missing in formal, top-down responses. Not only does this mean that displaced people are treated with dignity, but it can prevent the most vulnerable among them from being put at further risk.

The town of Neu Wulmstorf in northern Germany has received around 300 refugees and asylum seekers since 2014. A core group of 40 volunteers established a network called Welcome to Neu Wulmstorf. They have worked to support both the immediate needs of refugees and migrants, including shelter, health and safety, and their longer-terms needs for resettlement, self-sufficiency and integration. Three years later, in 2017, the volunteer group was still very active, supporting refugees and asylum seekers through activities ranging from one-on-one counselling and language courses to swimming and bicycle repair lessons.

Sources: Karakayali and Kleist 2016; Le Blond and Welters 2017

VOLUNTEERING: A TOOL FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION IN CITIES

MATTHEW RYDER DEPUTY MAYOR OF LONDON

Together with the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, my role is to bring together all Londoners and strengthen our communities. One of the most important lessons I have learned is the power of volunteering in achieving those goals.

Earlier this year, we launched our social integration strategy. Based on considerable research, it sets out a new definition of social integration – emphasizing that it is about more than simply the degree of contact between people but also includes promoting equality and improving people's levels of activity and participation in their local communities.

But encouraging social integration is a meaningless exercise unless people are provided with opportunities to come together. Volunteering does just that.

Volunteering helps citizens to connect with others in their local communities who may be from entirely different backgrounds. It creates bonds and shared identities that go beyond superficial differences that might otherwise seem important. Volunteering also provides a meaningful way of grappling with social problems – for example, reducing social isolation or improving mental health – for both the volunteer and the person benefiting from the volunteering.

Of course, volunteering is not the only way to improve social integration, nor does it solve every problem. But it is a hugely important tool that government and local authorities can use to bring people together. We know that all Londoners want to feel like valued members of their community and to play an active role in the decisions that shape our city.

But we need to understand better how we attract volunteers and why some people may choose to volunteer in their communities while others do not. For instance, we know older Londoners are more likely to volunteer, and that is why we are supporting a digital reward and recognition pilot to incentivize and reward volunteering among young Londoners. The Mayor's new multimillion-pound community sport programme, "Sport Unites", will also focus on ways to better support Londoners who support social integration through volunteering to teach, coach and participate in sports.

Most importantly, the Mayor is determined to find more effective ways to normalize volunteering as part of Londoners' everyday lives. That means making it easier for people to find activities that suit their interests but also ensuring that employers better support their staff to volunteer in their local community.

Volunteers prepare for the arrival of new refugees in Lesbos, Greece (UNV, 2017).

ENABLING MUTUAL EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TO DEAL WITH ADVERSITY

When people identify with a place and have even weak relationships with others living there, they are more likely to volunteer in times of crisis to help those around them.[127] This proximity and lived experience gives people personal knowledge of local challenges, and volunteering is a means of expressing their human impulse to relieve the suffering of those they interact with. Many examples from the literature demonstrate how volunteers have used their knowledge to care for those at risk. For instance, in West Africa local volunteers risked their lives to immunize and care for people infected with Ebola even though many were afraid of the disease and knew that they would likely be stigmatized by others in their community.[128]

Empathy between volunteers can help people under emotional strain bounce back more quickly from adversity

By providing opportunities to meet other people's needs, volunteering also allows community members to support each other emotionally through a crisis. Numerous accounts from the field research mentioned the value of emotional support received through mutual voluntary action as well as the sense of shared challenges and mutual understanding that such support engendered. Such *esprit de corps* is particularly useful during and after stressful events, as people join with others experiencing similar hardships. Some volunteers mentioned feeling less alienated and isolated, and prior research has documented similar benefits.[129,130] Voluntary action also provides opportunities for people to escape mundane stresses by enjoying the company of others as they work. Empathy between volunteers can help by establishing a social buffer and can help people under emotional strain bounce back more quickly from adversity.[131]

> "When you go out in groups, that's when you have fun. You joke, laugh with the others, and you forget your problems for a while.
>
> ▶ Female volunteer, Guatemala, SWVR field research

Volunteerism can also support people emotionally through organization of activities, rituals and events that provide spaces to collectively acknowledge shared problems. Numerous volunteer groups in the field research communities used music, stories, drama, poetry and dance to communicate messages to the broader community – covering issues ranging from HIV/AIDS and sexual and gender-based violence to the need for unity, tolerance and peace. Such activities, and the platforms for exchange that they provided, were viewed as particularly helpful in refugee camps, where people from different cultures and ethnicities frequently share a constrained common space.

CONNECTING COMMUNITY MEMBERS WITH SUPPORT NETWORKS

In addition to strengthening trust for collective action and enabling people to support each other emotionally during adversity, volunteering can enable volunteers to build relationships with other stakeholders inside and outside the community (box 2.4). Horizontal local networks developed through volunteering can expand people's access to resources and information in times of stress.[132] Studies have documented how peer training in disaster risk reduction practices, which is often conducted by women's groups and local volunteer networks, has disseminated local knowledge among participants and transferred that shared knowledge to local authorities.[133]

Relationships established through voluntary action expand people's networks of social support. In the Netherlands, people who receive government benefits are encouraged to volunteer. One of the reported benefits of volunteering is that it gets people out of their homes and forces them to interact with others in the community, and these interactions enhance people's feeling of belonging – an important aspect of community resilience.[134] People are able to draw on the networks they create in this way to enhance their own resilience in the face of adversity. A volunteer in Burundi described this benefit:

> "What is most important in being a volunteer is that it offers you a strong network of interpersonal relationships. [When times are hard] you can ask assistance from a doctor, a dentist, an agronomist and so on. So volunteerism helps people without a job or money survive.
>
> ▶ Local volunteer, Burundi, SWVR field research

Box **2.4**

Volunteer interpreters connect refugee communities

In refugee camps, where people from many countries and cultures occupy severely constrained space, volunteer interpreters play an important connective role in making daily life as normal as possible. In one Malawi refugee camp, volunteer interpreters facilitated community connections and learning by breaking through some common communication barriers associated with multicultural and multinational communities. These interpreters not only assisted in connecting refugees to institutions and service providers but also facilitated interactions between refugees from different backgrounds. Respondents asserted that daily life for many of the refugees and the activities of partner organizations in the camp would have essentially "come to a standstill" without both the official and unofficial volunteer interpreters.

Source: SWVR field research

Three local volunteers in Morocco remove stones and debris from an aquaduct (UNV, 2011).

The relationships developed through volunteering can also help community members develop the skills and connections needed for formal employment.[135] This benefit was most frequently mentioned in higher-income countries and tended to be associated with organizational forms of volunteerism. Some newly arrived refugees in Greece reported that they volunteer in order to make connections with potential employers, learn the language and learn more about the culture – all of which could help them find a job in their new country.

Informal mentoring was another commonly observed benefit of volunteer relationships. In higher-income countries, for instance, these new connections were a key source of support for immigrant communities. In Athens and The Hague, more established immigrants supported newcomers through informal networks and connections, helping them to navigate the bureaucracy associated with integration. Likewise, horizontal networks connected people to others with dissimilar ethnic and language backgrounds but with similar problems. In the Netherlands, immigrants who had learned Dutch or who had experience completing official forms helped other immigrants navigate the system. Volunteers who spoke other languages were able to support those who were not yet able to speak any of the more common languages used in their new country.

However, while the human connections characteristic of local volunteerism generally enhances the ability of communities to cope with stress and adversity, in some contexts it may diminish that ability, as shown in table 2.1 and discussed later in this chapter.

Table **2.1**

How human connections of local volunteerism enhance or limit community resilience

Positive contributions	Limits and threats
> **Trust**: A high level of trust among volunteers is linked to enhanced collective action.	> **Short-term vision:** Volunteerism based on social solidarity and emotional ties may prioritize immediate and urgent needs over long-term prevention and adaptation.
> **Solidarity**: Voluntary action can enhance solidarity or "power with others" through mutual assistance.	> **Exclusion:** Solidarity and collective voluntary action can lead to the exclusion of out-groups.
> **Cohesion**: Voluntary action helps renegotiate relationships between groups that have been divided and encourages the formation of networks of people with shared causes.	> **Division:** Facing stresses, there are few incentives for local volunteer groups to embrace people with different identities or divergent views.
> **Emotional support**: Community-based volunteers are likely to identify with and help those who are suffering, which can reduce feelings of alienation and isolation.	> **Neglect of local voice:** Voluntary relations are often focused internally, and power imbalances and lack of affiliation can limit the uptake of volunteers' local knowledge.
> **Local access**: Local volunteers have linkages and access to vulnerable groups.	> **Internal conflict:** Volunteer groups composed of marginalized populations can cause intercommunity conflict when they organize against broader community decisions or disrupt the status quo.
> **Contextual knowledge**: Local volunteers can contextualize information about the community for external actors.	
> **Links to wider networks**: When local volunteers are organized, they can play a bridging function between local and national or international actors.	

→ Distinctive characteristic 2: Volunteers' capacity to self-organize is a protective factor in resilient communities

Much of the volunteering experience examined in the field research occurred in response to chronic and recurrent shocks and stresses faced by communities rather than during preparation for or recovery from major and acute crises. The ability of volunteers to self-organize to cope with these situations was seen as fundamental to community resilience. Self-organization, which depends on strong functional relationships to spontaneously "make order" within a cooperative community, bolsters community autonomy by avoiding dependence on outside agents.[136] Self-organizing was the most often noted characteristic of volunteerism across the 15 field research communities.

> "This work can't be measured by a financial ruler. We know what we are doing – we value ourselves as the "helping hands" of the village. Without us the village would be disorganized, and poor people would be stuck.
>
> ▶ Local volunteer, Myanmar, SWVR field research

INFORMAL AND LOCAL VOLUNTEERS ORGANIZE IN RESPONSE TO PERCEIVED NEEDS

Evidence demonstrates that informal local volunteering is more flexible and responsive than both formal volunteerism and development and humanitarian programmes. Being less tied to specific methods and strategies, informal volunteers can quickly adapt to sudden and unexpected changes. Previous research found that around 80 per cent of survivors of the Tangshan earthquake in China were rescued by informal local volunteers who lived in the community and were able to respond quickly.[137] During any crisis when no centralized authority has stepped in to guide and coordinate the response, informal volunteers will

Volunteer voices: ROSELIA

Collective action sows resilience in Guatemala

Ten years ago, nobody cared about the community's forests. We kept cutting down trees. Then I decided to create a volunteer group to plant trees. I spoke with women in the community and many were interested to participate, which motivated me more. At the start we were 50 women, and a member of the community lent us a piece of land to plant our trees. That is how our group was born.

Volunteering helped me a lot. Ten years ago, I was a different person. I ignored my rights. Before, a man could tell me that I didn't know anything and I used to cry and think: "Yes, he is right". I was afraid to say anything in front of men, but not now. Now we discuss and I am not afraid to say what I think. For example, one day someone offended the women in the community and I defended them. The women told me: "Roselia, you are no longer afraid of anything".

In our group women make their own decisions. Before we had nowhere to go and no way to participate. Before it was only "*casa y casa*" (house and house). Now we have a place where we can talk, meet, relax and exercise our rights. In the plant nursery, we share our joys and problems. We are united.

We want more people to reforest their mountains across the municipality, so we will spread the message of our volunteer work.

Red Cross volunteers in Burundi meet next to the lake in Yaranda community (UNDP/Patrice Bizzard, 2018).

organize to provide emergency assistance. Motivated by humanitarian principles and proximity to those facing an emergency, local volunteers act and respond even without a formal shift of responsibility, power or resources.

A key advantage of self-organized volunteering during crises is its capacity to spontaneously engage more people more quickly than command and control systems are able to. Highly diffuse networks created through local volunteer groups and operating on a massive scale are able to recognize early warning signs and signal a need for a response to immediate threats and hazards. In the field research community in Burundi, local volunteers were referred to as the "community's eyes spread over the hills". During the field research, communities did not experience the types of shocks that would have required mobilizing thousands of additional volunteers; however, numerous reports and media stories recounted instances of emergency response by thousands of self-mobilizing volunteers.[138] For communities beset by ongoing stress rather than acute shocks, volunteers can also extend specialist services. Community health workers, for example, provide primary and frontline health care at a level that doctors and nurses cannot generally manage.

The field research also found that communities considered self-organized volunteering to be a feasible way to respond in situations where there was no financial capacity to hire people outside the community. By mobilizing volunteers, communities could reduce costs, making it possible to take actions that they otherwise could not afford to take. In Tanzania, for example, community leaders mobilized volunteers to begin building a school and then leveraged that initial construction to convince the government to provide resources to complete the work.

SELF-ORGANIZATION OF LOCAL VOLUNTEERS REFLECTS THEIR AUTONOMY AND OWNERSHIP

People's ability to organize through voluntary action was valued as an expression of their autonomy and ownership. Some respondents in the field research communities asserted that volunteering in their own community made them more influential and more eager and committed to serving their community, and some local volunteers expressed a preference for solving problems internally. As one volunteer in Madagascar expressed: "Our community is like a household. As long as we can, we do not call external people to sort the problem; we try to do it internally." Such sentiments are often connected to statements of personal responsibility emerging from voluntary engagement – for example, "strengthening our community". A comment on the role of volunteerism in communities under strain summarizes this rationale well:

> "[community volunteers] were the only ones putting their hands up…. A lot [of volunteers] didn't want to be part of that. But there were also a lot who said, "No-one else will do this. It has to be us. This is our community".[139]

SELF-ORGANIZED VOLUNTEERING IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FOR ISOLATED AND MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

Although self-organized volunteering was evident in all 15 field research communities, the need was particularly acute in communities with few alternative options for support. This includes communities in remote or rural areas or in areas recovering from conflict and communities of people who are not well integrated into the local social structure, such as migrants in large cities. For such communities, a lack of formal services or prohibitive barriers to reaching those services mean that self-organization may be the only way to get things done.

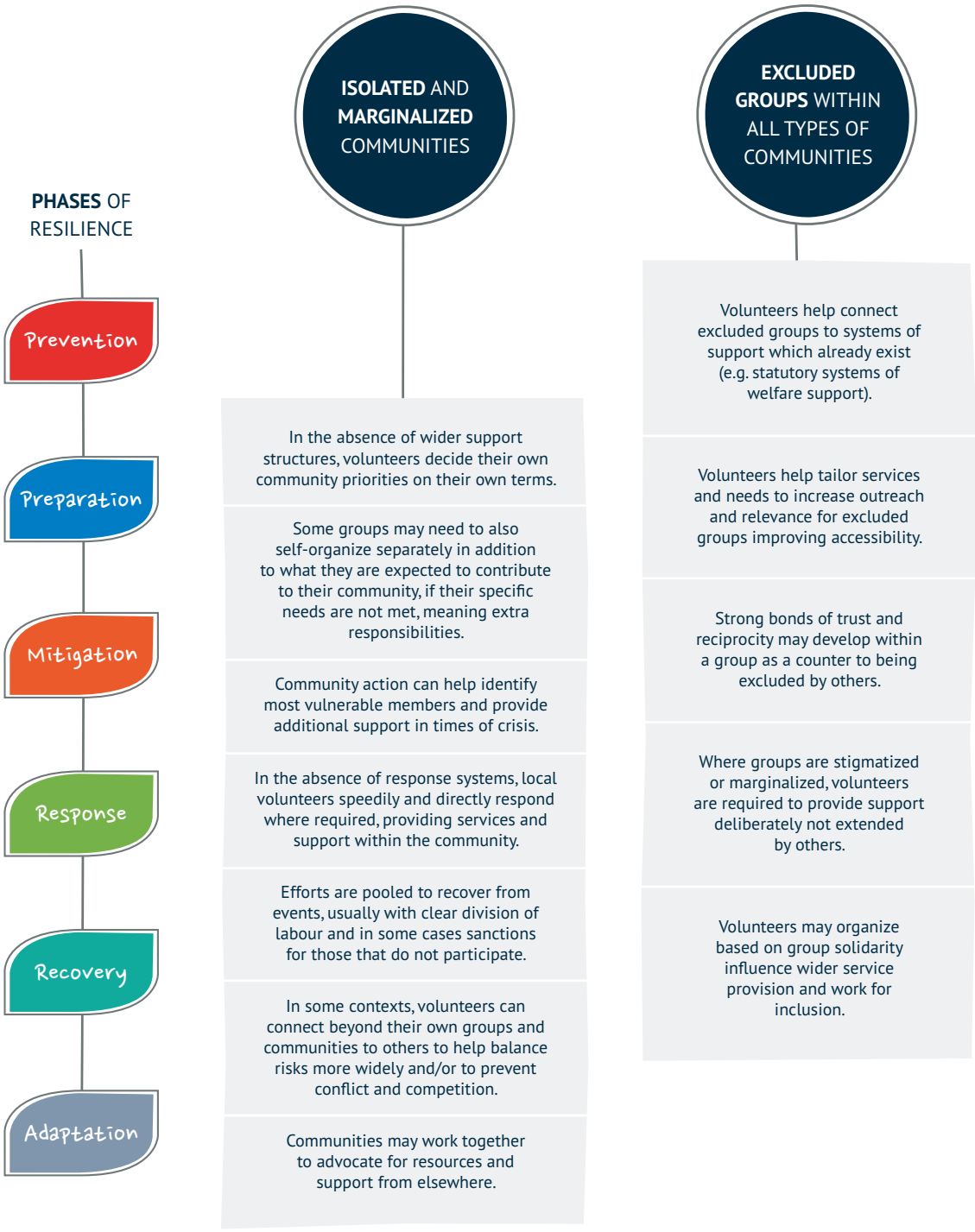
> "People who have money in town may solve problems by paying money, but we solve problems by our own cooperation because we are not rich.
>
> ▶ Research participant, Sri Lanka, SWVR field research

Self-organized volunteerism is especially prevalent in rural areas, where other types of support are less available. Small and rural communities are likely to be hit especially hard when disaster strikes, including adverse weather, environmental changes and conflict, because residents are often dependent for their livelihoods on conditions that are adversely impacted by such calamitous events. Because these outlying areas are often beyond the reach of national and international development and humanitarian assistance services, they rely on self-organized voluntary action as a survival strategy.

Self-organized volunteering is also a key strategy for marginalized groups whose needs are not adequately addressed by formal institutions (figure 2.5). Self-organized volunteering gives voice to marginalized groups and connects them with others in advocating for their needs. For example, in the Dzaleka refugee camp in Malawi a group of people with disabilities organized to improve their limited access to education and to address their

Figure 2.5

Relevance of volunteerism for marginalized people and groups



A volunteer counsellor supports refugee registration at Sag-Nioniogo refugee camp in Burkina Faso (UNV/© Eric St-Pierre, 2014).

social exclusion in the camp. Without the voluntary networks they established, their needs would have remained invisible to others in the camp. Likewise, in Russia volunteers supported community members who were marginalized because of their HIV status or drug or alcohol addiction to access services. Whether ostracized or simply unable to tap into mainstream areas of support and services, marginalized community members may come together through formal and informal volunteer networks and associations to create their own support structures to address these sensitive issues.

Disenfranchised women also organize to meet their needs through volunteerism. Women in the field research communities reported participating in volunteer women's groups to overcome feelings of vulnerability. They relied on collective action with other women to reduce the stresses and insecurities they encounter as women, particularly related to household responsibilities such as child rearing and other care roles.

In some communities, however, women were unable to benefit from volunteer opportunities. This was most common in rural communities and in areas without a strong presence of external actors. In some rural communities women suggested that men could speak for them in the field research, yet their perspectives suggested that women could be doubly and even triply burdened when volunteering was added to productive and reproductive responsibilities. Self-organizing to address women's own priority needs often came on top of their household and livelihood responsibilities as well as other forms of voluntary work in line with community priorities determined by (often male) community leaders. Where such hierarchies exist, taking the community as a starting point for shared interests and priorities and as a basis for collective action may be problematic, as is explored later in this report.

These examples demonstrate some of the barriers to self-organization in less open and equal communities and societies. Social and political challenges often constrain people's freedom and space to associate and organize for voluntary action. Lack of access to resources also limits what can be accomplished. Whereas in more open contexts, self-organization may be a useful "stepping stone" to changing the policies and practices of wider actors, in other contexts self-organized volunteering may be only a short-term solution.

While the self-organizing characteristics of local volunteerism generally enhance the ability of communities to cope with stress and adversity, in some contexts they may diminish that ability, as shown in table 2.2 and discussed in the next section.

→ Limitations and challenges of local volunteering

Although local voluntary action offers a wealth of distinctive advantages to communities, such as strengthening relationships and connections and self-organizing for mutual support, it can also face substantial challenges. Some observers question whether community members have the desire or capacity to voluntarily manage risk.[140] Others are concerned that volunteering may crowd out public provision. Imbalances of power in the community

Table 2.2

How self-organization of local volunteerism enhances or limits community resilience

Positive contributions	Limits and threats
> **Speed and immediacy:** Local volunteers provide frontline and immediate first response in a crisis.	> **Exploitation:** Local volunteers organized to meet particular needs can be used as low-cost labour with insufficient compensation or support.
> **Scale:** Spontaneous volunteering can mobilize large numbers of people during a crisis; wide geographic dispersion of volunteers enables early recognition of threats.	> **Substitutive:** Local volunteers fill gaps in government services, potentially discouraging public investment.
> **Availability:** Local volunteers are often the only sources of help available in a crisis and can organize when centralized authorities are unavailable to guide and coordinate an emergency response.	> **Compulsory:** Some local community resilience strategies require "voluntary participation", with people who fail to participate being fined, shunned socially or denied access to collectively produced goods or services.
> **Flexibility:** Informal local voluntary action is less tied to standard methods and procedures and can more readily adapt to changing local conditions.	> **Scale:** In some contexts, self-organization can mean an inability to effectively use large numbers of local volunteers during crises.
> **Innovation:** Local volunteers often problem-solve based on immediate needs and resources.	> **Isolation:** Volunteers not connected to mainstream services are dependent on local resources.
> **Ownership:** Self-determined priorities and limited control by external actors foster a voluntary response and ownership of solutions.	> **Segmentation:** Local volunteering is often a survival strategy for vulnerable or minority groups that self-organize to meet specific needs that are not being met by the wider community. This may not counter processes of marginalization and instead increase the burden on the most vulnerable.
> **Cost-effectiveness:** Efforts to organize draw on available and in-kind resources of volunteers.	

might mean that, in practice, agency is not genuinely devolved to voluntary groups, throwing into doubt the legitimacy and representativeness of voluntary action.[141] And even though volunteerism is influenced by wider social processes and political structures, the efforts of local volunteers can be isolated from those processes and structures, limiting the resources and formal support structures available for local action. As a consequence, communities may be stuck in a reactive cycle of coping with stresses and shocks rather than investing in prevention measures. These challenges are explored below with an eye to better understanding how to alleviate or overcome them through links with external agents, the subject of chapter 3.

VOLUNTEERS MAY EXCLUDE THOSE MOST IN NEED OF HELP

Voluntary community action is often depicted as a harmonious and consensual endeavour. But that view fails to consider the countervailing influences of powerful interests, local elites, social differences and prejudices related to gender, class, caste and ethnic differences within communities, which can block inclusive action. Unequal power relations within geopolitical, social and economic systems can leave communities, groups and individuals more vulnerable to risk because of their marginal position. As a relational approach to cooperation, volunteerism may be influenced by the status of those involved.

How marginalized groups are incorporated into resilience systems through volunteerism may determine whether volunteerism is empowering or disempowering

Volunteering is not inevitably inclusive or egalitarian and can take advantage of people who are vulnerable (often youth, women, poor people and people with disabilities).[142] Even in communities that are relatively cohesive, the exclusion of vulnerable groups is a persistent reality because of complications created by interpersonal power relations and social inequalities. In addition, when people collectively experience stress, they tend to focus on helping those within their own circles. How marginalized groups are incorporated into resilience systems through volunteerism may determine whether volunteerism is empowering or disempowering.

PATTERNS OF PARTICIPATION AND EXCLUSION MAY DIFFER BY TYPE OF VOLUNTARY ACTION

Research participants frequently noted the exclusion of youth, women and people with dissenting opinions from local voluntary groups or their lack of voice and decision-making power in the groups that they did belong to. The roles of local informal volunteers often matched traditional gender roles. For both women and men, but especially for women, this restricted their participation in the full range of volunteering roles. Although local volunteering takes place outside the household, for women it was often seen as an extension of their domestic or caring duties, so volunteering often provided less obvious benefits to women beyond personal fulfilment and strengthening their networks of solidarity. Men's activities were also compartmentalized. Particularly in low-income countries, men were most often tasked with activities requiring technical skills or physical strength, and they were often stigmatized for volunteering instead of making money as the family breadwinner. This social expectation often discouraged men from participating in any form of voluntary activity, a particularly pronounced phenomenon in informal volunteerism.

> "Male volunteers may receive negative stigma as they're expected to be the breadwinner of a family. They're not expected to work for little to no pay.
>
> ▶ Local volunteer, Netherlands, SWVR field research

WOMEN AS THE ARCHITECTS OF COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

MARGARET ARNOLD WORLD BANK

What images come to mind when you think of a disaster? Search and rescue teams pulling people from the rubble? Relief camps filled with displaced families receiving aid from international organizations? These are the typical images we see in the media. However, they misrepresent the reality that the vast majority of people are rescued and helped by their fellow community members after a disaster.

Researchers have documented the effectiveness of community voluntary groups that spontaneously self-organize after disasters, noting the need for outside aid providers to not undermine local resilience.[d] Women are often the architects of community resilience, and empowering women is critical to ensuring that community-led disaster responses are strong and effective.

For example, in pastoral communities of Kenya and Ethiopia, the provision of capacity-building support to women's savings and loans groups improved livelihood diversification and helped communities better manage the risks associated with the 2005–08 drought cycle.[e] In Nepal, grassroots women's organizations are upgrading settlement infrastructure to reduce disaster risks, participating in multi-stakeholder dialogue and collaborating with local government. The resulting credibility has earned women's organizations public roles in emergency preparedness and seats on committees that allocate resources for disaster risk reduction.

These are two examples in a body of mounting evidence that women's empowerment is key to the resilience that leads to effective local responses to disasters. They also demonstrate the value of recognizing communities not as project beneficiaries but rather as partners who can set priorities, influence policies, and act and react in ways that are responsive to community needs.

d. Twigg, J. and Mosel, I. (2017). Emergent groups and spontaneous volunteers in urban disaster response. *Environment and Urbanization* 29(2):443–458.
e. Arnold M., Mearns, R., Oshima, K. and Prasad, V. (2014). *Climate and disaster resilience: The role for community-driven development.* World Bank.

Local volunteers work together to build a road for their community in Burundi (UNDP Burundi/Aude Rossignol, 2013).

While volunteering can unite people around cohesive goals in confronting adversity, differences between types and expressions of volunteerism can affect who is excluded and how volunteerism contributes to community resilience. Informal volunteer groups have the flexibility to exclude people outside their own circles. For example, reflecting on the decision not join a formal volunteer emergency team, one informal local volunteer in Burundi explained: "I prefer not to engage in the Red Cross volunteer team because I do not want people to tell me how I have to work, and for whom, for free. I prefer to decide by myself who to help and what to do when the opportunity or the event occurs."

Though barriers to participation in formal volunteerism may be higher, for those actually engaged, formal volunteerism as driven by organizational policies and standards appeared to be more structured and fair. In contrast, informal volunteering was perceived as less inclusive since it relied on the ability to guarantee reciprocity among close connections and consequently required the freedom to exclude and even discriminate. In the field research community in Sudan, the introduction of formal volunteerism provided structured opportunities for women to participate in volunteer work and gain recognition for their activities. For example, the conditions for participating in volunteer savings associations stipulated that both women and men should be selected as representatives and trained for leadership roles. This is an important finding because inclusiveness and the participation of diverse groups in decision-making are key attributes of resilient communities.[143]

"

The lake has saved many people from starvation – but only people located close to the lake. Red cross volunteers have saved everybody without discrimination. In this sense, we can say that volunteers are more generous than the lake.

▶ 24-year-old fisherman, Burundi, SWVR field research

VOLUNTEERING CAN BE STIGMATIZING

As a people-centred and relational approach to building community resilience, volunteerism can lead to exclusion through the social judgements that people make about volunteers and voluntary action. In some communities volunteer participation is stigmatized, while in others conversely a failure to participate is stigmatized. A woman in the field research community in Egypt shared her experience of stigmatization by a family member: "One day what prevented me from continuing my volunteer services to neighbours was my husband's comment, 'What will people think? Will they think that you're taking something in return?'". Another respondent reported, "We also face criticism from some community members, reproaching us about having time to waste or mocking us because we are silly enough to work without remuneration. Sadly, our work is depreciated because our work is free."

"

Sometimes because of the nature of volunteering work I need to travel in the early morning or evening. I was criticized for being out in the community away from my house, talking to lots of different people, including men. Lots of people gossiped about me.

▶ Female volunteer, Myanmar, SWVR field research

Similar sentiments were expressed in more economically developed contexts as well. For instance, new immigrants in the Netherlands reported feeling distrusted and stigmatized by native residents, which discouraged them from volunteering. Others said they felt judged for volunteering after overhearing comments that volunteering is appropriate only for people with surplus time and resources. Citizens in Greece who volunteered to help recent immigrants and refugees often reported being stigmatized, reflecting the polarization of opinion on immigration. A small number of respondents also viewed volunteering as counterproductive, believing that it exploited young people and women and discouraged governments from solving social problems.

"

There is a prejudice in the Greek culture that volunteers are exploited by people that have money, and this association is overshadowing the word "volunteer"...so they don't want to consider themselves as volunteers. They consider themselves as active citizens.

▶ Local volunteer, Greece, SWVR field research

In addition to stigmatization, other cultural and contextual issues, such as conflict and safety, influence people's decisions about volunteering in unstable conditions. As emphasized in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, concerns about safety are particularly relevant to women, who often feel threatened in situations that could result in violence.[144] This sentiment was reflected in a comment by a female focus group participant in Egypt:

> "Some volunteering conditions, like in refugee camps, are not accepted by me or my family because sometimes they are in remote places or occur during dangerous emergencies. As a female and a parent, places that pose a danger or that have unreliable organization might hinder my participation.
>
> ▶ Focus group participant, Egypt, SWVR field research

LOCAL VOLUNTEERING CAN DISPROPORTIONATELY DISADVANTAGE VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Adverse events and circumstances put even more demands on the limited time, capacity and resources of vulnerable people.[145,146] Resource constraints make it difficult for people to volunteer, and respondents considered such constraints to be a limiting condition for sustaining self-organized volunteerism over the long term. Certain cohorts are particularly stretched during crises and are more likely to be severely affected by shocks and stresses. People living in extreme poverty are often hurt most by disasters and conflicts, both physically and psychologically, in part because of the fragility of the conditions in which they live.[147,148] Risk reduction measures rarely include them,[149] so the poor are more likely to suffer the economic, physical and other consequences of crises.[150]

Women and girls are also disproportionately vulnerable to crises, including natural disasters, and typically suffer higher fatality rates during disasters than other groups.[151] This vulnerability is often linked to cultural and behavioural limitations on their mobility, along with socially prescribed norms, roles and obligations for care taking.[152,153] Yet women are not inherently vulnerable to disasters, and their risk of dying during disasters can be greatly reduced when social norms reflect greater gender equity (box 2.5). [154] On the positive side,

Box **2.5**

The tangible benefits of women's involvement in disaster planning

Engaging women in disaster planning can greatly reduce their risk and mortality. In 1991, Cyclone Gorky killed 138,866 people in Bangladesh. Women who died outnumbered men who died 14:1. Over the next 16 years, community-based disaster preparedness groups – many led by women – developed disaster response plans, including enhanced early warning and evacuation plans. When Cyclone Sidr hit Bangladesh in 2007, far fewer people died – around 4,400 – and the gender mortality ratio decreased to 5:1. While any gender disproportion in fatalities is unacceptable, the progress made over those 16 years reveals the value of including women as community mobilizers – training them, working with them to communicate early warning messages and creating women-only spaces for discussion and action.

Sources: Arnold and de Cosmo 2015; Paul and Rashid 2016

there is some evidence that shocks and stresses can also alter gender roles and norms – for example, when women take on traditionally male governance or economic roles during conflict.[155]

Indigenous peoples, whose livelihoods often depend on natural resources, are severely disadvantaged when these resources are damaged or destroyed.[156] People with disabilities have fewer employment opportunities to diversify their livelihoods and cushion them during hard times, and they are more likely to experience discrimination when resources are scarce.[157] Transportation difficulties often make it hard for them to cope with shocks and stresses.[158] Children suffer more when people and communities are under strain, as rates of child labour, forced marriage, child trafficking and other forms of exploitation, abuse and abduction rise.[159] For older adults with limited mobility, disasters can be particularly damaging and can aggravate underlying health problems, increasing their risk of illness and death.[160]

These vulnerable groups are not only inequitably affected during adversity, but in some cases they are likely to be relied on to volunteer during shocks and stresses, even though they may be the least able to spare the time and resources to do so. As a largely unregulated practice, informal local volunteerism relies on mechanisms of self-governance that are not always equitable. Communities under constant stress or experiencing acute shocks are at a high risk of exploiting some of their members. For instance, in the field research community in Greece, where unemployment was high, young people complained that volunteering was used primarily to provide low or no-cost labour, with organizations taking advantage of their skills and education without compensation.

As a largely unregulated practice, informal local volunteerism relies on mechanisms of self-governance that are not always equitable

LOCAL VOLUNTEERING CAN PRIORITIZE PRESSING NEEDS OVER PREVENTION

Although voluntary action is a necessary component of community resilience in times of acute stress, it is not sufficient as a long-term solution to persistent shocks. When volunteerism is undertaken as an urgent response to a crisis, it tends to prioritize immediate and pressing needs over long-term prevention and adaptation. Communities that lack the human and financial resources to sustain resilience can become stuck in a cycle of shock and response, precluding efforts to engage in strategic measures. Effective, immediate responses by local volunteers to shocks can moderate acute threats to people's livelihoods, but there was little evidence from the field research that, when acting in isolation, local volunteers were able to engage in prevention and adaptation strategies. Rather, vulnerable communities tended to be in a persistent state of reaction that diverted attention from long-range planning for disaster avoidance or mitigation. Some of these challenges could be addressed through collaboration with external organizations (box 2.6), as explored in chapter 3.

LOCAL VOLUNTEERS MAY BE DISCONNECTED FROM WIDER SYSTEMS FOR RESILIENCE

Local volunteers were often valued for their knowledge about local conditions. As a community member in China articulated: "The volunteer members are familiar with the community's history and its relationship with…the local and non-local residents. They know exactly how to get along with the residents and handle their problems." Despite this validation of the advantage of local knowledge, there was little evidence from the field research to show that local volunteers were able to use their local knowledge to influence the strategies of external organizations. There was indeed evidence that power imbalances influenced the acceptance of local knowledge – by both local communities and external agencies – and conferred special legitimacy on external knowledge. Reflecting a common

Box **2.6**

Volunteers contribute to early warning systems in Burundi

In Burundi, the biodiverse Kibira National Park region has a vulnerable local population that is at risk from environmental threats such as deforestation and erosion, which are being intensified by climate change. With the support of Red Cross Burundi, local communities have set up volunteer groups to map and monitor environmental risks as part of an early warning system. Recognizing that women, youth and marginalized groups are more vulnerable to shocks and stresses and that volunteering provides voice, agency and capacity to those who are disempowered, the volunteer groups have adopted an inclusive approach. Women and youth volunteers have leading roles, and in addition to monitoring risks the volunteer groups promote risk awareness among the local community, focusing particularly on informing disempowered or marginalized groups.

Source: SWVR field research

refrain among local volunteers, a group in Madagascar lamented: "We are not being heard because of our education level". As a further limitation, in some cases informal local volunteers had limited access to critical technical information.

> "The volunteer groups have the mechanism to express their opinions, but their voices are not fully responded to and respected.
>
> ▶ NGO leader, China, SWVR field research

Although local volunteers have a wealth of indigenous knowledge that can inform wider strategic thinking, in practice most information flows down rather than up. Collaborations need to take better advantage of the complementary benefits of the local knowledge of volunteers and the wider connections and access to technology and resources of external partners.[161] Such effective and functional collaborations with local volunteers can lead to more appropriately designed interventions and more effective emergency responses.

Another complication, perhaps owing to poor internal–external coordination or a mismatch between immediate needs and the skills of spontaneous volunteers, local volunteers are not often used to their full capacity. Furthermore, they are sometimes thought to be disconnected with the "bigger picture" of activities occurring through more formal response mechanisms.[162] Some prior studies have reported that local volunteers can be a distraction from centralized responses, complicating the work of emergency services, blocking or delaying the delivery of resources to affected areas and risking injury or death because of their lack of training.[163,164]

Ensuring the safety of local volunteers can be problematic. Even when community-based volunteers are offered a formal role, few agencies plan for their participation, provide training or perform background checks.[165] Local volunteers are often mobilized quickly in response to an urgent need and are not typically in a strong position to negotiate basic security provisions.[166,167] There may also be an assumption that local volunteers are relatively safe even in high-conflict environments because they are viewed as more neutral than external actors and thought to be able to draw on local networks and knowledge – an assumption that is not well supported. Local volunteers, because they often work in situations of conflict and crisis, may be even more likely to be in harm's way than external

actors.[168] As well as being in physical danger, volunteers in conflict and post-disaster settings are also at psychological risk.[169,170,171] Overall, there was little evidence that the safety of local volunteers was assured simply by including them in wider resilience-strengthening systems.

Despite challenges with coordination and ensuring the safety of local volunteers, emergency management systems often take for granted that local volunteers will be ready to respond. In many crises, local volunteers are the first responders because they are available and proximate, not because they are best suited to the task. The sentiment "if we don't do it, who will?" was particularly evident in more isolated rural areas and in urban areas where there was little trust in the authorities. The ready availability of local volunteers, though often perceived as a benefit, highlights a lack of public services and external partnerships in times of need. While it is true that local volunteers may engage when they see no other option, it is also true that volunteers who are not well supported, heard or integrated into management planning will be less effective over the long term and may eventually burn out and disengage.[172]

As this chapter illustrates, volunteerism provides a mechanism for channelling individual actions into collective strategies for coping with risk. The framework, norms and connections that volunteerism provides make it a foundational institution for local resilience-building. The distinctive strengths of volunteerism, as recognized by communities themselves, include a human-centred and relational approach that strengthens social cohesion as well as an ability to self-organize around individual or community priorities. When the equilibrium of a community is disrupted, volunteer participation can prepare communities for change while providing opportunities to confront norms of exclusion and social inequity through new forms of participation.

Yet volunteering is not inherently inclusive or equitable, and not everyone contributes or benefits equally. The field research showed that the exercise of human agency to include or exclude others was at once a benefit and a challenge. These findings challenge the assumption that focusing on the local will automatically enhance participation and empower volunteer groups in a transformative way. Whether social norms can be reshaped to enhance inclusive and more equitable participation depends largely on the creation of an environment that recognizes and uses the distinctive characteristics of volunteerism to help communities "bounce back".

These findings challenge the assumption that focusing on the local will automatically enhance participation and empower volunteer groups

Communities themselves provide essential knowledge about the limits of local volunteerism for community resilience. Flexibility, human-centred relationships, self-organization and local resources provide a strong foundation for and vital contribution to communities' resilience, but importantly the benefits and challenges of the connectivity and relationship-building inherent in local volunteerism signal huge potential for complementary collaborations with other actors. Where stresses and shocks exceed the threshold of positive contributions by community volunteers, there is reason to explore connections outside the community. As one national development agency report emphasizes: "Resilience does have its limits. It is necessary to provide relief when people have exhausted their ability to manage the disruption caused by conflict or when conflict overwhelms their ability to cope and causes total livelihood breakdown."[173] Done well, contributions from external actors can complement local action. The importance of nurturing complementary collaborations between local volunteers and external agents is the theme of the next chapter.

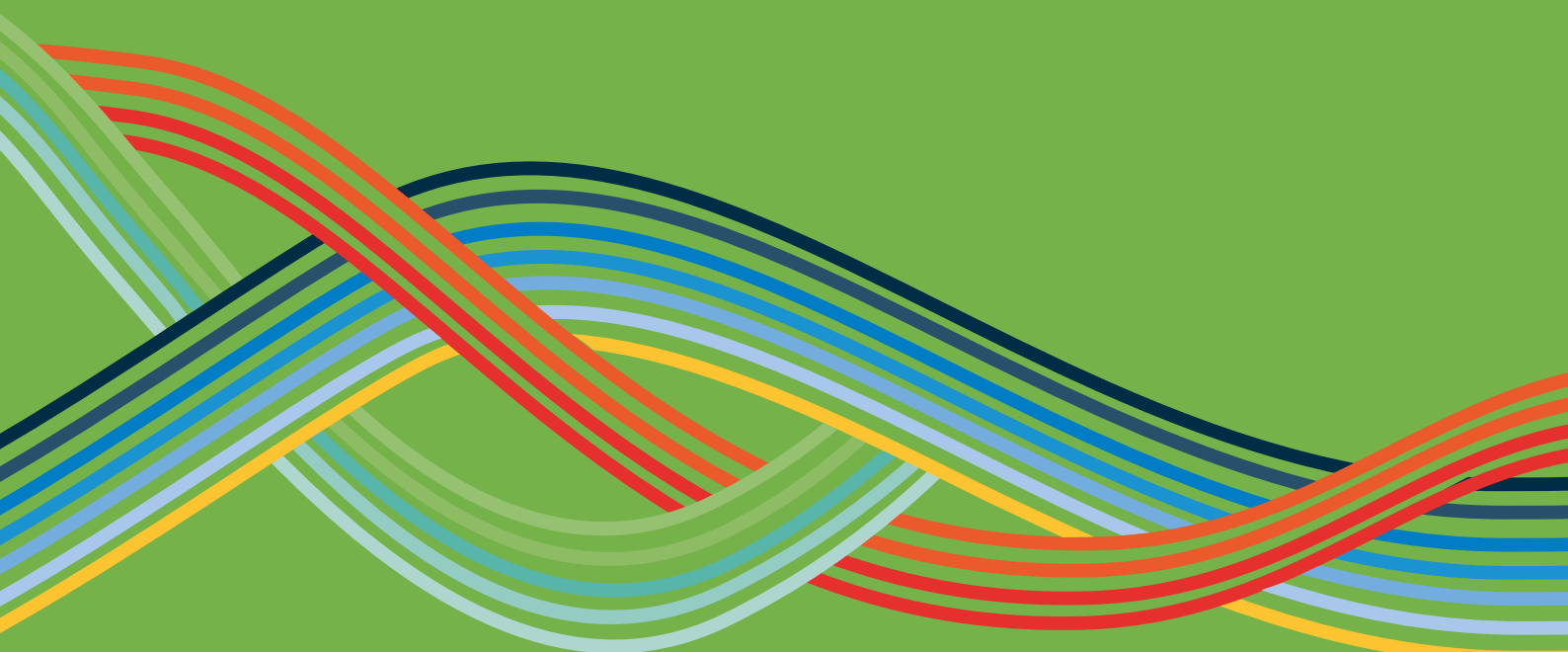
WE SEE THE LIMITS OF WHAT WE DO:

COLLABORATIONS

WITH LOCAL VOLUNTEERISM FOR COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

"As volunteers, we can easily see the limits of what we do. We cannot respond to the demanding issues as we should; it is not in our hands to act in place of the government or the international NGOs. We lack the needed resources; we really need external assistance in case of crisis."

– **Focus group participant**, Burundi, SWVR field research



Techo youth volunteers work with urban communities to improve housing in Peru (Techo, 2017).

3

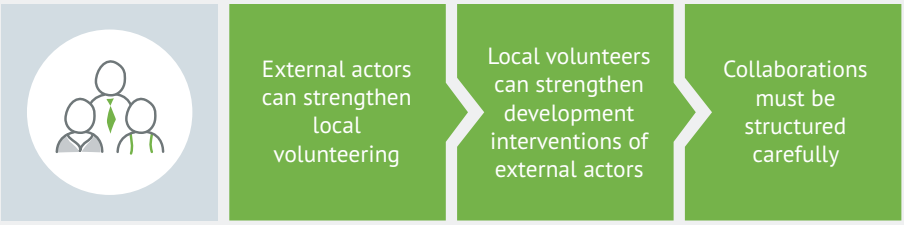
To build on the distinctive contributions of local volunteering and overcome some of its limitations, this chapter investigates how connections and collaborations between local volunteers and development and humanitarian stakeholders can enhance community resilience. It also explores how top-down and externally driven actions can unintentionally undermine communities' own capacities to cope. Understanding the relative strengths of diverse actors and how they fit together helps position local volunteerism as a more effective part of a wider ecosystem for resilience.

Contemporary theory on strengthening community resilience recognizes the importance of complex systems and diverse actors working together in times of stress, conflict and crises.[174,175] It sees "institutional multiplicity"[176] and "nested institutions" as enabling action by different sets of actors to address problems at multiple levels.[177] Each institution and actor brings distinctive strengths and perspectives to the task. Supporting these theoretical underpinnings, the findings in this chapter suggest that greater responsibility can be shared through the co-generation of knowledge and action during crises and conflict.[178] This shared responsibility emerges from a systemic perspective that respects and values the complex and overlapping roles and responsibilities of civil society, governments, NGOs and other stakeholders in coping with change and transforming vulnerable communities.[179]

Figure **3.1**

Scope of Chapter 3

Who can collaborate with local volunteerism to strengthen community resilience?



Despite the relational strengths, self-organizing capacities, quick response and flexibility of local volunteerism, it is difficult for self-organizing communities to be optimally resilient without complementary support and direction from external stakeholders.[180,181] For the purposes of this report, external stakeholders are taken to be those originating from outside the community boundary – be it from neighbouring communities, subnational or national authorities, or any other private or public actor. Local volunteers sometimes lack the technical capacity, skills or access to the information, knowledge and resources needed to produce transformative solutions. They may lack the political space to assemble and organize, or they may be confronted by situations that are dangerous or inappropriate for voluntary interventions. Furthermore, many issues that local communities are dealing with have their origins outside the local system and so cannot be effectively resolved at the community level (figure 3.2).

Figure **3.2**

Thresholds and limitations of local volunteerism

"As volunteers, we can easily see the limits of what we do. We cannot respond to the demanding issues as we should; it is not in our hands to act in place of the government or the international NGOs. We lack the needed resources; we really need external assistance in case of crisis. For instance, during the famine, we lacked resources to address the massive influx of needs. People asked but our response was very limited; we hadn't enough food for every person in need.

▶ Focus group participant, Burundi, SWVR field research

Peace and development actors can effectively partner with volunteers on activities that extend beyond local capacities. This chapter explores two ways to link these external actors and community systems to strengthen community resilience. One is through collaborations that strengthen locally led resilience-building at the community level itself. The other is to strengthen the ability of volunteers to manage risks by connecting volunteers with wider risk-sharing systems (figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3

Complementarity of efforts of local and external actors can strengthen volunteerism for community resilience

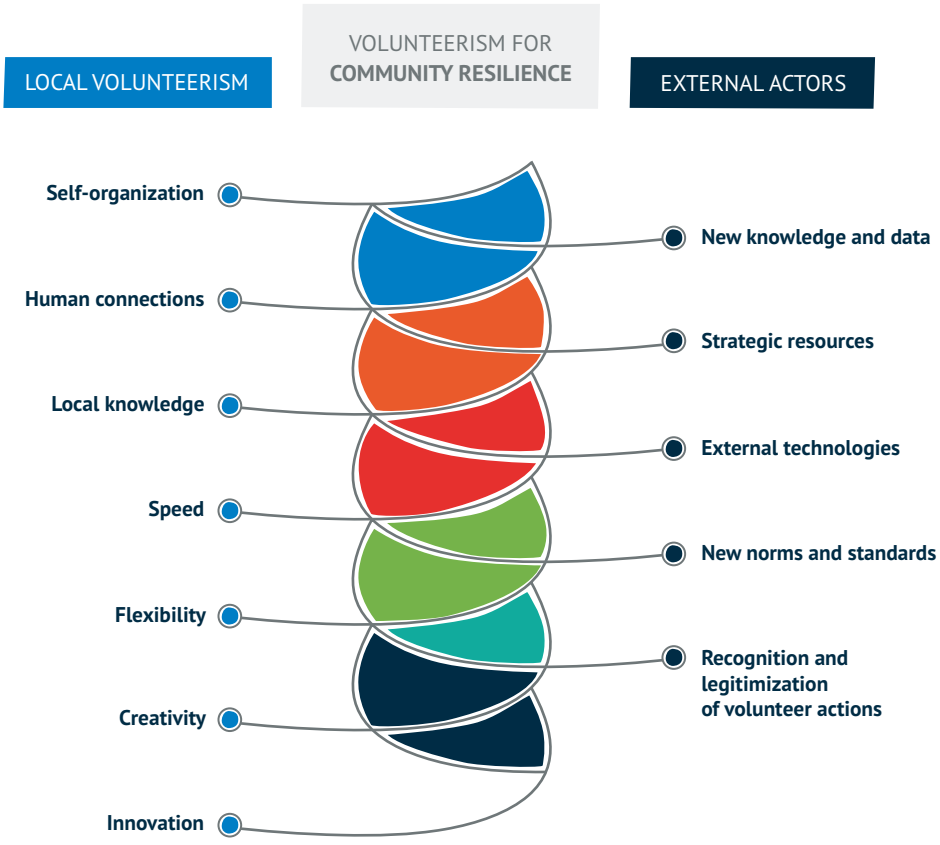
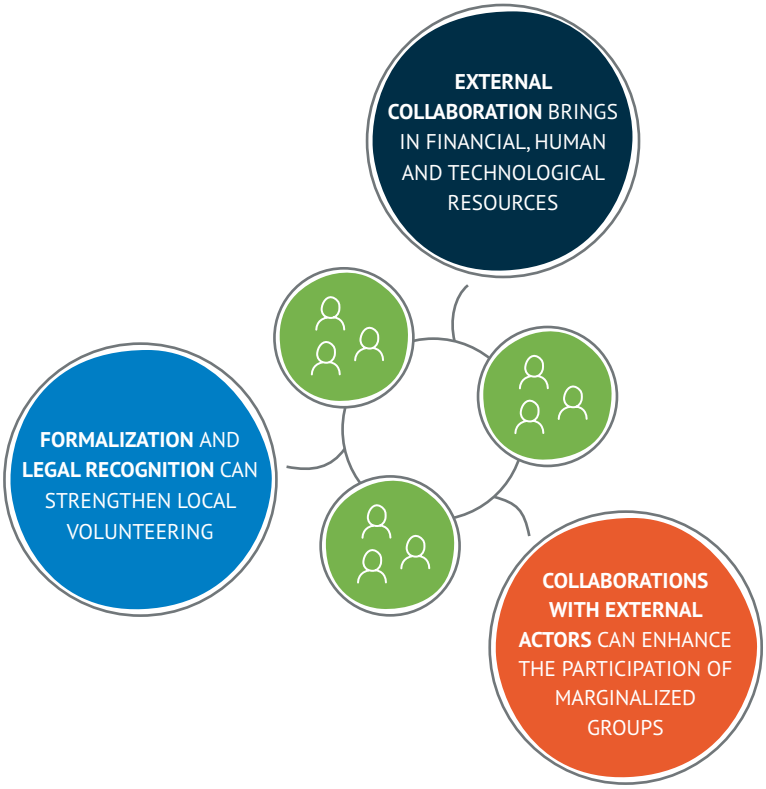


Figure **3.4**

Collaborations with external actors can strengthen local volunteering



As highlighted in the introduction to this report, a renewed emphasis on national ownership and leadership seeks to align external assistance with national frameworks, policies and plans and thus to situate development processes and accountabilities within a wider social contract. Development partners are transforming in line with this focus – for example, through the United Nations reform process. Yet while localization discussions often focus on national ownership, local or community-level ownership has received less attention.

The external partners discussed in this chapter include a wide array of actors, both domestic and international. The majority of external assistance to communities is domestic, coming from other communities and from wider systems and structures at district, regional or national level, but some also comes through international cooperation.

➔ Collaborations with external actors can complement local volunteering

New waves of migration and displacement and evolving work and family norms have implications for who can bear added strain in times of crisis. When local capacity to cope with stresses and hazards is weak or when problems are particularly complex, collaborating with actors from outside the local community can help communities safeguard their assets and livelihoods.[182] This section illustrates the advantages of external collaboration – from boosting available resources to influencing social norms and conferring legitimacy and legal recognition on local voluntary efforts. In addition, it explores the distinct place occupied by volunteerism in peacebuilding, development and humanitarian as the link between community-based knowledge and the technical knowledge and skills of external partners.

EXTERNAL COLLABORATION BRINGS IN FINANCIAL, HUMAN AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES TO SUSTAIN LOCAL ACTION

While local volunteerism creates relationships and networks within the community, it also needs connections outside the community to optimize community resilience. Some of the few constructive outcomes of crises are new linkages between local and wider actors[183] and connections of local groups to larger institutions.[184,185] However, most of the volunteering examined in the field research communities occurred during intense cycles of persistent stresses, such as conflict, food and water insecurity and chronic poverty, rather than during preparation for or recovery from major acute shocks. The reality is that communities facing ongoing persistent stresses often fly under the radar, largely unrecognized by external actors.

When dealing with persistent vulnerabilities, local volunteers have little ability to take new risks or adapt their response if external resources are not available. To move from responding to acute crises to addressing longer-term drivers of vulnerability, local volunteers emphasized the need to tap into financial, human and technological resources from outside the local system.

> "If there was more funding given to organizations or volunteer workers that help refugees or people with a migrant background to become integrated and to deal with the problems they face, they could do much more and reach many more than otherwise is possible.

▶ Local volunteer, Netherlands, SWVR field research

Financial resources

Decision-makers often underestimate the costs, time and expertise needed to encourage and sustain local volunteerism. After all, as evidenced in the field research, local volunteers need comparatively few resources to incentivize and coordinate participation in self-organizing groups. However, the field research also illustrates the limits of local voluntary action when not well supported. Investments are needed to develop and sustain the adaptive capacity of communities. In most instances, informal volunteers in the field research communities did not expect to be paid for volunteering, but they did expect to receive the resources to allow them to work effectively. As a volunteer in Burundi explained: "Our main need to strengthen and develop volunteerism is not remuneration, nor time, nor recognition. It is only resources to enable the work. We do our best, but it is not enough."

> "Volunteers work for the construction of the road, but it is not really efficient. Just the minimum – it does not result in a beautiful road but just a road that is usable. It is temporary work, quickly done, that does not really sort the road problem. We only work with local materials and our own strength…we repair the road and the bridge, but once the rainy season comes it's back to the same. We need external aid.

▶ Women's focus group participant, Madagascar, SWVR field research

Examples from the field research suggest that financial resources were one of the most requested external inputs. Together, local voluntary action and external resources can co-produce more efficient solutions. For instance, using external financial support, local volunteers in Bolivia provided their labour to construct a shelter and renovate a football field for youth, and local volunteers in the Philippines built water storage tanks using financial support from the National Economic and Development Authority. Local volunteers in the field research communities who self-organized consistently stressed how difficult it was to sustain voluntary effort over the long term without ongoing financial support (box 3.1). Cases in which volunteers continued their work despite an absence of external support were uncommon and generally entailed considerable individual sacrifice.

Human resources

Discussions about external support to local volunteering typically reference the complementary contributions of national, international and online volunteers. By complementing expressions of local volunteerism, volunteers from other national and international communities can fill some of the gaps, particularly those related to technical knowledge. The distinctive collaboration arrangements under which volunteerism takes place mean that such external volunteers are often embedded in the communities they are supporting, enabling them to develop relationships of trust. As one government official participating in a field visit in Tanzania acknowledged: "The community trusts (the international volunteers) more than me because they live in the village – I live in (the city)".

Capacity development has been a key contribution of external actors. In a number of cases where capacity-building by local volunteers was mentioned, the local volunteer trainers had first been trained by external volunteers, civil society organizations or national governments. Beyond capacity-building, external volunteers also brought in new ideas and technical inputs. For example, in the field research community in Sri Lanka international volunteers working alongside local volunteers provided information on cultivation practices to improve productivity and profitability. A villager in China also described the benefits of external input:

> "When I first talked to the external volunteers, I initially thought that they were amateurs, but through their work the community got to know a lot of experts who came to the village and deliver some guidance, which enabled the community to learn some professional knowledge.
>
> ▶ Community member, China, SWVR field research

Despite these benefits, the picture of human resource contributions that emerges from the field research reveals a primarily top-down model, with limited horizontal (or local–local) capacity-building among volunteers. Although this pattern is consistent with much of the literature on volunteerism and capacity-building,[186] examples can be found of diverse forms of human resource contributions. For instance, as reported in 2015 SWVR, the Government of Togo created a volunteer programme that brought together volunteers from the north and south of the country to strengthen community capacities.

Increasingly, international volunteering opportunities are no longer limited to individuals from high-income countries seeking to volunteer. As well-resourced and experienced formal volunteering organizations have emerged in low- and middle-income countries, many national and international volunteers now come from these countries[187] (for example, 83 per

Box **3.1**

The critical role of voluntary community health promotion workers

Health promotion volunteers were active in nearly every low-income field research community, particularly in remote and vulnerable areas beyond the reach of state services. These volunteers transmit information about nutrition, maternal and child health, reproductive health and other areas of primary health care and disease prevention. They are often perceived as having a better understanding of the needs and problems of the community than medical professionals from the state health service.

Despite these benefits, the health promotion volunteers struggled to do their work. Most received initial training and support from the government or development agencies, but they commonly reported having to end their health promotion activities soon after due to a lack of support. Volunteers who managed to continue often did so at considerable personal cost. As one of the many volunteers from the field research community in Guatemala described their situation:

Why doesn't the government give us more support? Imagine that we're doing this job, saving lives...there is no incentive... I pay for my transportation myself. When I started, I bought my scissors, a gabacha *[apron], a pot for boiling water and an umbrella because sometimes we have to go out in the rain, a backpack, a pair of boots.... We just pay for it ourselves. But what can we do when the mothers themselves come and look for us?*

Source: SWVR field research

One of the volunteer midwives shows her tools for assisting delivery and care of newborns in El Eden, Guatemala (UNV/Mariano Salazar, 2018).

cent of UN Volunteers were from the global South in 2016).[188] Although volunteering across low- and middle-income countries offers no guarantee of inclusive access or protection from top-down, donor–recipient power dynamics,[189] it does create additional options for sharing knowledge and skills internationally through people-to-people cooperation.

Technological resources

Online ("digital", "cyber" or "virtual") volunteerism has opened up possibilities for innovative collaborations with local community volunteers. Mobile phones, crowdsourcing, open-source software, social media, participatory geographic information systems and online volunteerism all offer new opportunities for enhanced communication and information-sharing among communities. With access to digital technologies, online volunteers anywhere in the world can support community efforts, an increasingly important way of connecting local volunteers across the globe as they respond to stresses, disasters and crises (box 3.2).

COLLABORATIONS WITH EXTERNAL ACTORS CAN ENHANCE THE PARTICIPATION OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS

Building effective institutions requires the participation and engagement of the people that these institutions are intended to serve.[190] Inclusive participation in civic and governance processes is vital to community resilience.[191,192] For transformational changes to occur in communities, local social and cultural values and norms need to co-evolve with wider changes in the institutional architecture. Examples provided in chapter 2 illustrate that informal local volunteers, even when best positioned to identify vulnerable groups, may choose not to prioritize them, preferring to serve friends, family and others in their immediate circles before reaching out to people in more vulnerable circumstances.

Several examples from the field research highlight how the presence of formal and external organizations can influence the inclusion of women and other marginalized groups. For example, to enhance community resilience, international volunteers in several communities promoted women's empowerment and worked to change attitudes that circumscribed women's actions within traditional gender roles. Likewise, several interventions designed

Box **3.2**

Linking diverse skills and knowledge through online volunteering

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme manages the UN Online Volunteering service (www.onlinevolunteering.org), a dedicated platform that mobilizes more than 12,000 online volunteers every year. Online volunteering is a simple, universal and effective way for organizations and volunteers to work together to address sustainable development challenges anywhere in the world – from any device.

Since June 2014, UN Online Volunteers have been providing technical support to Cameroon's Agriculteurs Professionels du Cameroun, a rural development project in Tayap village in the Congo Basin – an area that has suffered widespread habitat and biodiversity loss. The project aims to promote sustainable livelihoods and community resilience. The UN Online Volunteers include: an information technology expert from Burkina Faso who is creating maps of the village; an agricultural engineer from Togo who analyses satellite images of forest coverage; and a renewable energy expert from France who is developing a solar energy project for the village. The sustained multidisciplinary support provided by these international online volunteers has been critical to the success of the project, which has won several awards and grants.

Source: UNV 2015b

to empower women and increase their participation were initiated by volunteers in line with the policies of formal organizations. As women in these communities took volunteer positions in local management and development committees, their engagement in community activities and decision-making increased. This is consistent with research documenting how participating in crisis mitigation and recovery efforts has strengthened women's leadership capacity, altered perceptions about women's roles in society and challenged men's dominance of decision-making and planning functions in disasters.[193]

FORMALIZATION AND LEGAL RECOGNITION CAN STRENGTHEN LOCAL VOLUNTEERING

In addition to the resources, connections and standards that can accompany external collaboration, there are non-tangible benefits, such as greater legitimacy and recognition. Local volunteers expressed an understanding of both the value of external validation from formal actors and the need for greater recognition by all stakeholders of the worth of communities' own efforts (see chapter 4). Community collaborations with external groups were instrumental in transforming self-organized efforts that emerged during times of crisis into more formal associations and committees. When capacitated with resources, legitimacy and the political space to assemble and organize, volunteers who began working together to solve acute and persistent challenges in their communities were able to continue their activities after the crisis passed.

As women in these communities took volunteer positions in local management and development committees, their engagement in community activities and decision-making increased

Although NGOs, United Nations agencies and other development and humanitarian actors can enhance recognition of local volunteerism under the right circumstances, only governmental actors can provide the legal recognition needed to sustain some local efforts. For example, volunteers in Madagascar formed their own security groups to deal with cattle-rustling through local group conventions (*dina*). However, these efforts were greatly strengthened when a district initiative (*dinabe*, or great *dina*) was established to support the communities' actions. The *dinabe* joined local groups under a wider structure that conferred recognition and legitimacy on the *dina* and may have contributed to their sustainability.

> "The success of the dinabe is not only because it's young people involved; it's because it's a state initiative. But it's not something the state has imposed on the community; the community was involved. So it's the collaboration between the state and the community that has ensured the success of the dinabe. If it had come from the young people only, it wouldn't be effective.
>
> ▶ Group of young men, Madagascar, SWVR field research

In this example, the community received training, equipment and funding through its partnerships with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other agencies. These resources also helped women's associations and community groups endure economic hardships. The partnerships with regional authorities came with very different benefits, particularly legal recognition. Both forms of partnership conferred legitimacy on voluntary action and boosted sentiments of ownership, responsibility and duty. Other initiatives that these community volunteers had wanted to pursue, such as forest stewardship, had been stymied by a lack of legal recognition, without which they were powerless to act.

In a community in Sri Lanka, an organized group of local volunteers was able to apply for development programmes and associated funding after they took steps towards legal registration. These legal provisions became a gateway for claiming rights and establishing

spaces within which action could be taken. It is clear that the tendency of organizational or statutory frameworks to either preclude or incorporate local voluntary action has a marked impact on how effectively local volunteers and local voluntary organizations can contribute to resilience building.

➔ Local volunteers can strengthen interventions by external actors

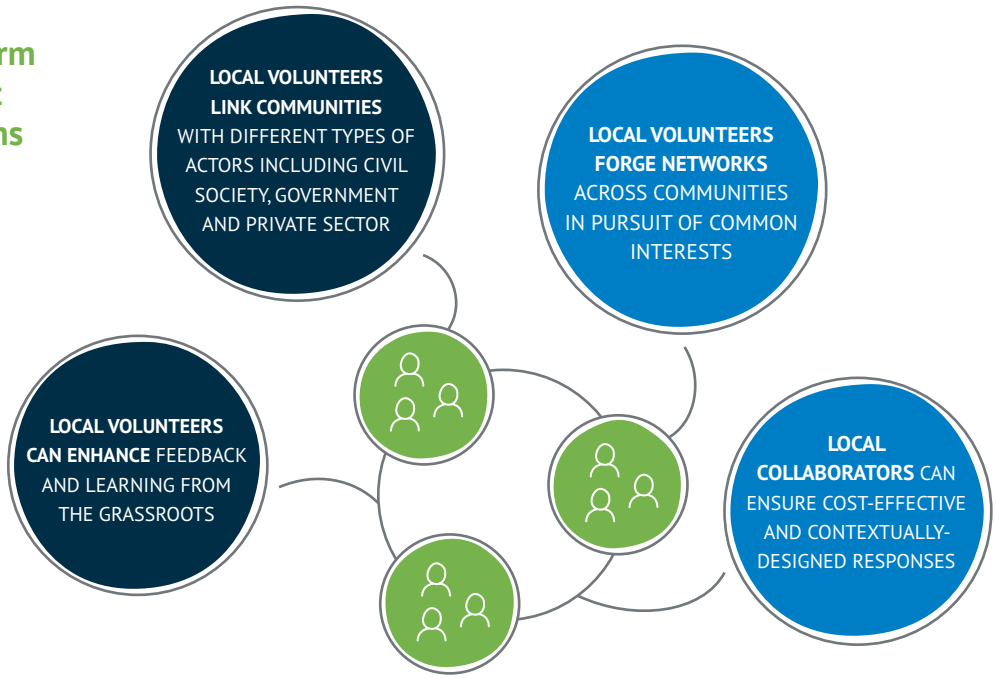
The previous section explored how connections between local volunteers and external actors brought access to resources, networks, standards and status to support and legitimate community volunteers. This section examines how such connections can help communities engage more effectively within wider risk-sharing systems to enhance community resilience. These partnerships can yield synergies by informing external actors about specific community contexts and connecting them to marginalized and hidden groups in local communities that might otherwise be overlooked (figure 3.4).

LOCAL COLLABORATIONS CAN ENSURE MORE COST-EFFECTIVE AND APPROPRIATELY DESIGNED RESPONSES

Perhaps the most visible and recognized value of engaging and integrating local volunteers in efforts to strengthen communities is cost reduction. To be effective, volunteers require investment and support to train and prepare them for service, so while volunteers are not paid, there are costs involved. However, the scale of voluntary labour can provide a significant boost to external interventions and responses at a comparatively low cost. For example, in environmental protection, volunteers' knowledge of local materials, weather patterns and soil conditions can contribute value that is unavailable outside of local systems.

Figure **3.5**

Local volunteers inform and support different types of collaborations to enhance resilience



Volunteers conduct water monitoring tests at the Dzaleka refugee camp in Malawi (UNV/Gianna Schellenberg, 2018).

> "In a significant proportion of the township, volunteers are primarily responsible for the provision of electricity and road construction and upgrading – a substantial saving for the government.
>
> ▶ High-level township administration official, Myanmar, SWVR field research

While grateful for the participation of external groups, a variety of respondents in the field research communities complained that external actors failed to understand the conditions facing their community. For example, villagers in Tanzania reported that aid partners had dug a number of community wells that were too shallow, based on surveys taken during the rainy season but without local input on dry season conditions. As a result, water was inaccessible for much of the year. This was particularly frustrating because the community was responsible for contributing a portion of the costs and volunteering much of the labour for building the wells.

By coordinating with local volunteers, development and humanitarian organizations can also improve the effectiveness of their interventions. Communities recounted multiple examples of local volunteers conveying information between community groups and government agencies or external organizations. Because local volunteers live in the area, they are well positioned to help development experts and national and international responders understand the struggles and needs of the most vulnerable and hidden groups within a community, to ensure that they are not left behind.[194] Volunteers in the field research communities also noted many characteristics of volunteerism that governments and technical agencies often lack, including flexibility, rapid response and knowledge of local vulnerabilities.

> "It is obvious that the members of the volunteer group know the community well. As residents who have lived here for decades, they know the community better than any of us...so they are pretty familiar with the residents and the history of this community and have a good relationship with neighbourhoods. It's obvious that they know the best way to launch and run a campaign.
>
> ▶ NGO leader, China, SWVR field research

LOCAL VOLUNTEERS CAN ENHANCE FEEDBACK AND LEARNING

Exercising their local knowledge and role as connectors, local volunteers can tap into diverse networks to expand on information and feedback provided to other communities and stakeholders. This knowledge can inform and prioritize external strategies for sustainable development as well as for disaster mitigation, prevention and response.

Local volunteers can also use new technologies to contribute as "citizen scientists", collecting data for technical analysis to increase the knowledge base about weather patterns, disaster risk or areas affected by acute crises.[195] Just as technology can enable external actors to support local efforts, as in online volunteering, so too can local volunteers use technology to complement the local activities of external actors. Local volunteers across the globe are mobilizing to gather data as part of a participatory approach to managing risk (box 3.3).[196] Research from Haiti found that crowdsourced maps informed by voluntary contributions were "extremely effective", producing "the most complete digital map of Haiti's [services]" compared to other forms of mapping.[197]

Much of the success of volunteer-based crowdsourcing comes from leveraging the local knowledge of volunteers through collaborations with tech-savvy volunteers in other areas. When information comes directly from local volunteers, governments and humanitarian agencies often view it as supplementary only, but when the information has

Box **3.3**

Using open-source software to monitor and report during crises

Open-source mapping software is a powerful tool for volunteers responding to crises. Ushahidi is an open-source platform that has enabled voluntary participation in data mapping for over a decade. Launched in 2007 to track reports of post-election violence in Kenya, Ushahidi has been refined by volunteers and expanded to other uses and contexts. People used the platform to monitor and report on voting during the 2017 general election in Kenya, including reporting on voter suppression, ballot problems and cases of violence.

Building from this model, open-source software is now increasingly employed in emergencies around the world. For example, during the 2017 earthquake in Mexico, thousands of volunteers translated thousands of text messages and social media posts from people needing help. Volunteers were able to geolocate these messages, tag their location and communicate the mapped information to responders on the ground. There are similar accounts of how open-source software has helped communities to cope with and recover from other recent crises such as the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, the 2014–16 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, violence in the Syrian civil war and hurricanes Harvey and Irma in 2017.

Sources: Chen and others 2013; Goodchild and Glennon 2010; Hahn, Blazes and Lewis 2016; Haworth and Bruce 2015; Meier 2013

been crosschecked and validated by expert volunteers, the outcomes are more directly meaningful.[198] For example, in the Netherlands, data on air quality that was gathered by volunteers was systematically cross-referenced with data from government static monitoring stations to enhance its reliability.[199]

HORIZONTAL COLLABORATIONS WITH OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS CAN ENHANCE LOCAL ACTION

In many contexts, volunteers can connect with other related groups or communities to achieve similar goals or promote mutual interests (box 3.4). Exchanging knowledge about homegrown development solutions with others facing common challenges and constraints can overcome some of the limitations of local voluntary action.[200,201]

Examples from the field research are supported by wider evidence. For example, volunteer women's groups in Central America used their knowledge of community conditions and relationships to mobilize grassroots organizations and to guide government policy and programming on community response to disasters.[202] The women helped develop a methodology to teach mayors and other local authorities how to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015, an international initiative to help countries and communities become more resilient to the hazards that threaten their development. In the Arab States, a movement of women volunteers worked for more than a decade to change nationality laws.[203] Other studies have documented how women's groups and volunteer networks, which often conduct peer training in disaster risk reduction practices, have shared local knowledge and transferred this to local authorities.[204] Volunteers who participate in these efforts often develop their own skills and knowledge while contributing to development in their community. As a volunteer in Egypt acknowledged: "Awareness campaigns added value to me even before adding it to the community".

volunteers often develop their own skills and knowledge while contributing to development in their community

Box **3.4**

Cross-community volunteering to protect shared natural resources

Many risks that affect resilience cross community boundaries. Effective management of these risks therefore demands cooperation between communities. Volunteering is one way to achieve this.

In Sudan, the Wadi El Ku Catchment Management Project works with several communities surrounding the most important water source in arid North Darfur. Initiated by UN Environment together with the Darfur Regional Authority and the Government of North Darfur State, and funded by the European Union, the project has mobilized strong cultural norms of collaboration in working with volunteers from the different communities to assess water levels, provide basic services and advocate for a holistic and cooperative approach to natural resource management. In this way, volunteers help to link and improve relations between neighbouring communities that share such a key natural resource.

In Myanmar, volunteers from six creek-side villages formed the Creek Network to deal with the problem of pollution from illegal gold mining, which was affecting people's health and livelihoods and the environment. Over two years, the Creek Network worked with local administrations to confront illegal gold miners. With support from non-governmental organizations, volunteers learned how to sample and test creek water, document mining violations and report findings to the authorities. They succeeded in having the illegal mines shut down and subsequently monitored the creek on a regular basis. The Creek Network has now become part of national and regional networks and has shared its experiences with other communities facing similar problems.

Source: SWVR field research

THE RELATIONAL STRENGTHS OF VOLUNTEERISM CAN ENHANCE VERTICAL COLLABORATIONS

Local volunteers' ability to connect, network and build vertical relationships is key to enhancing community resilience.[205,206] Volunteers and voluntary groups can use their relationships to strengthen cooperation and coordination between local civil society, government institutions and external organizations (box 3.5). As intermediaries, volunteers can build bridges of trust to relay important information from technical agencies to community-based groups (top-down), while also raising and representing issues of concern from community groups to technical agencies, governments and other external actors (bottom-up).[207]

In countries where conflict is chronic, often disabling public services for years, international aid agencies may step in to provide basic services. Working through official gatekeepers, these agencies often find it difficult to identify and reach the most vulnerable groups.[208] Volunteers can draw on relationships of trust to connect international actors with marginalized groups whose needs would otherwise remain unknown.[209] As a respondent in a Burundi explained: "We are in the best position to identify vulnerable people. Because we are local, we know people and we meet them every day, but also because we share the same concerns and issues, we know how to identify the most urgent needs and who should benefit first." Another volunteer in Myanmar remarked: "Community volunteers face the same problems at the same intensity at the same time. Therefore, we have much more empathy and sympathy based on the intensity of the problem for our community compared to outsiders."

> "Volunteers who live in [the community] have the advantage of being better integrated in the community and have better access to key people.
>
> ▶ Youth volunteer, Sudan, SWVR field research

Volunteers can complement the work of large-scale external initiatives to increase their effectiveness. Pooling resources across communities to create macro-level social welfare systems or provide universal basic services can bolster efforts to prevent and mitigate shocks and stresses over time. As previously mentioned, Red Cross volunteers in The Hague helped newly arrived refugees overcome language and information barriers to claiming

Box **3.5**

Data collected by volunteers holds polluters to account in China

Across the world, communities face severe environmental challenges that threaten human health and livelihoods. The Chinese environmental NGO Friends of Nature works with local volunteers to map and monitor environmental risks at the community level. Friends of Nature has initiated more than 30 legal cases against polluting factories and industries. These legal challenges have built on evidence collected by volunteers that relies on their local knowledge, connections and flexibility and is coordinated through new mobile and smart technologies. This volunteer-led model has inspired other environmental NGOs and demonstrated to policymakers and local authorities the value of working with volunteers on environmental protection.

Source: Thornhill and others 2017

statutory entitlements. Similarly, volunteers in many countries augment medical services for specific groups. In Australia, for example, best practice guidelines promote the use of volunteer companions in the community care of older adults in order to reduce falls.[210] Where the coverage of services is insufficient and civil and political rights are guaranteed, volunteers can also employ social accountability mechanisms to pressure government agencies and other authorities to improve service provision.

It is important to recognize that certain risks cannot be effectively managed over the long term by volunteers acting alone at the community level. For example, although local volunteers can carry out important frontline roles in the context of conflict – sharing information and identifying, monitoring and responding to some types of threats – conflict and the divisions it creates or exacerbates can necessitate external involvement. Ultimately, the state is responsible for the protection of civilians: "Thus, though vital, local agency must never be regarded as a substitute for the protection responsibilities of national authorities or – failing that – relevant international actors".[211]

→ Collaborations must be structured carefully

To yield benefits for all, local–external collaborations must be structured carefully to avoid destroying or co-opting the distinctive relationship-building and self-organizing characteristics of local voluntary action. The field research communities included several examples of partnership arrangements that were not structured effectively. Wider evidence of poorly implemented collaborations has demonstrated problems such as frequent misunderstandings between external organizations and vulnerable communities;[212] culturally incongruous directives that fail to account for local social dynamics;[213] weak political will or capacity to coordinate external assistance;[214] and overall poor reception of external activities, services and directives by local groups.[215,216] Furthermore, while there are demonstrated potential positive effects of collaboration with external actors, as covered earlier in this chapter, it must be recognized that the presence of external actors – even those who are there to protect – can also fundamentally threaten community safety and security.[217,218]

Volunteer voices: MOHAMMAD

Finding a sense of purpose through listening to others

I used to be an accountant but I was unhappy with my job. In 2015 I got the opportunity to volunteer to support asylum seekers in Cairo. Outside the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office, tired and desperate people would start lining up from 8.00 in the morning. We would receive more than 100 new applications every day, and alongside these existing applicants would also queue up to inquire about resettlement cases, refugee status determination and financial and medical assistance. My volunteering work entailed providing these asylum seekers with information and help to fill out their forms.

I also worked to identify the most vulnerable cases – we had a total of 120,000 registered applicants but we didn't have the capacity or the funds to serve them all.

What I consider most precious about my volunteering was the opportunity to listen to everyone's problems and offer some compassion. For the asylum seekers, I represented someone they could talk to who could try to find solutions or at least some respite from their hardships. This brought me happiness and I hope it did to them as well.

Involvement by external agencies can weaken local self-organization and ownership if the external support provided is too heavy-handed or continues too long. Experience shows that external actors may create dependencies that undermine resilience and weaken key connections and relationships.[219,220] Furthermore, a community's sense of ownership can decline when local volunteers are prevented from articulating their own priorities but are called on to implement the priorities of external agencies. As several examples from the field research illustrate, agencies that incorporate volunteers into their programmes may leave those volunteers with little time to deal with their own livelihood priorities.

In addition to potentially weakening feelings of ownership, governments and external agencies can co-opt the autonomy of local volunteers. Several research participants expressed concern that authorities at different levels were directing volunteer efforts to support their own priorities rather than those of the communities. When external systems co-opt local efforts instead of building on them, using volunteers solely to carry out their own priorities, the distinctive value of volunteering is undermined. Governments and external agencies need to balance the autonomy of self-organized volunteer groups with efforts to integrate them into external systems of support.

A community's sense of ownership can decline when local volunteers are prevented from articulating their own priorities

Across a variety of contexts, field research participants also raised concerns about volunteerism being used as a substitute for key government or humanitarian services. Promoting community resilience through localism and greater reliance on volunteers must not be seen as absolving government and humanitarian aid systems of responsibility for meeting the basic needs of community members.

A final concern emerging from the field research suggests that external interventions can exacerbate local tensions if the ensuing benefits are unequally distributed and reinforce feelings of isolation or marginalization. For instance, respondents on the periphery of communities in Guatemala and Madagascar complained that external interventions reinforced inequalities in terms of opportunities to volunteer. People living away from the centre of the village also believed that they were unfairly disadvantaged by the work of national and international volunteers and had less access to the resources that often accompanied their interventions.

This chapter illustrates how stakeholders can leverage the complementary contributions of local voluntary action to make communities more inclusive and resilient. The field research shows the diverse ways that external stakeholders affect the environment for volunteerism and ultimately help shape the choices and opportunities available to vulnerable people working to manage risk within their communities (table 3.1). Accordingly, there is an important role for governments, private entities and civil society in helping local volunteers to ensure that all people can participate in the decisions that affect their lives. When stakeholders collaborate effectively, volunteering can realize its potential as an inclusive and empowering force, particularly for people who would otherwise remain isolated and excluded.

Although collaborations with external partners can leverage local voluntary action – especially when communities have exhausted their ability to manage and cope on their own – partnerships must be structured in a spirit of true collaboration that recognizes and values the communal relationships and self-organization strengths of local voluntary action. Development and humanitarian actors need to recognize and invest in complementarity that enables all types of actors to connect and collaborate without undermining the distinctive strengths of local volunteerism.

Observing volunteerism in communities under strain can tell us much about volunteering itself. People's voluntary responses to shocks and stresses show that volunteering is both a property of resilient communities and a mechanism for strengthening resilience through well-informed and properly implemented collaboration. The following chapter investigates how all actors with a stake in creating resilient communities can take actions to maximize the distinctive characteristics of volunteerism that contribute to community resilience.

Table 3.1

The value and limitations of local–external collaborations

Positive contributions	Limits and threats
> **Financial resources:** Temporary supports can sustain local voluntary action when local capacity is exceeded.	> **Hierarchy:** Collaborations between external and local volunteers assume a top-down approach to capacity-building and technology transfer.
> **Technical expertise:** External (national, international and online) volunteers can complement community action with technical expertise unavailable locally.	> **Competition for service provision:** Volunteering must not replace basic government services.
> **Standards of equity:** External actors can confront and influence inequitable gender norms and other forms of exclusion apparent in some informal local volunteering.	> **Undermining the local:** External agencies can weaken local participation and self-organization.
> **Recognition:** Legitimacy and legal recognition can strengthen local volunteering.	> **Dependency:** External supports may create dependencies and diminish the sense of ownership once external supports are removed.
> **Cost reduction:** Volunteerism, while not free, can reduce costs.	> **Cultural insensitivity:** Culturally inappropriate directives that fail to account for local social dynamics can cause interventions to fail, while unequally distributed benefits can exacerbate local tensions.
> **Local knowledge and connections:** Local volunteers can inform and enhance external responses while helping to identify vulnerable people.	> **Co-optation:** The autonomy of volunteering can be co-opted by governments and external agencies that end up directing volunteer efforts to support their own priorities.
> **Shift from coping to resilience:** With combined resources, communities and partners can work toward prevention and adaptation.	

HORIZONTAL CONNECTIONS UNLEASH THE POTENTIAL OF VOLUNTEERING

CHESKA PATOW, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, AND **JONATHAN ROSSI**, SOCIAL DIRECTOR, TECHO

Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the most unequal and most urbanized regions in the world. Poverty affects 30.7 per cent of its population – that is, over 186 million people. Around 80 per cent of the region's population live in cities,[f] and young people in the region no longer need to travel to know what poverty is like. This context sets a path not only for reflection but, most importantly, for taking action.

In response, many youth-led organizations in the region have become platforms for mobilizing the power of young people to push for change. Techo, which was set up in 1997 in Chile and is now present in most Latin American countries, has mobilized over 1 million young Latin American volunteers over the past two decades. These volunteers work mostly in informal settlements to undertake activities such as constructing emergency housing for poor families, building parks and recreation areas, and strengthening leadership within their communities.

For maximum impact, Techo saw the need to work together with other volunteer organizations. In Peru, it joined the SoyVoluntari@ network, an initiative supported by UN Volunteers that brings together different initiatives. For example, when El Niño hit Peru last year, the SoyVoluntari@ network delivered a joint response through coordinating volunteer-led contributions both in donation centres and in the field.

By joining hands with other volunteering organizations, Techo's work has been further strengthened. As a network, volunteering organizations can more strategically engage and contribute to public policies on a range of issues. Furthermore, these connections increase the value of volunteerism in society by bringing together the voluntary efforts of millions of individuals under a common purpose. Building a sense of constituency provides the opportunity for young Latin American volunteers to meaningfully exercise their citizenship through proactive and impactful actions.

f. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (n.d.). Available at: estadisticas.cepal.org/cepalstat/portada.html

Volunteer teaching handicrafts at the Dzaleka Camp in Malawi (UNV/Gianna Schellenberg, 2018).

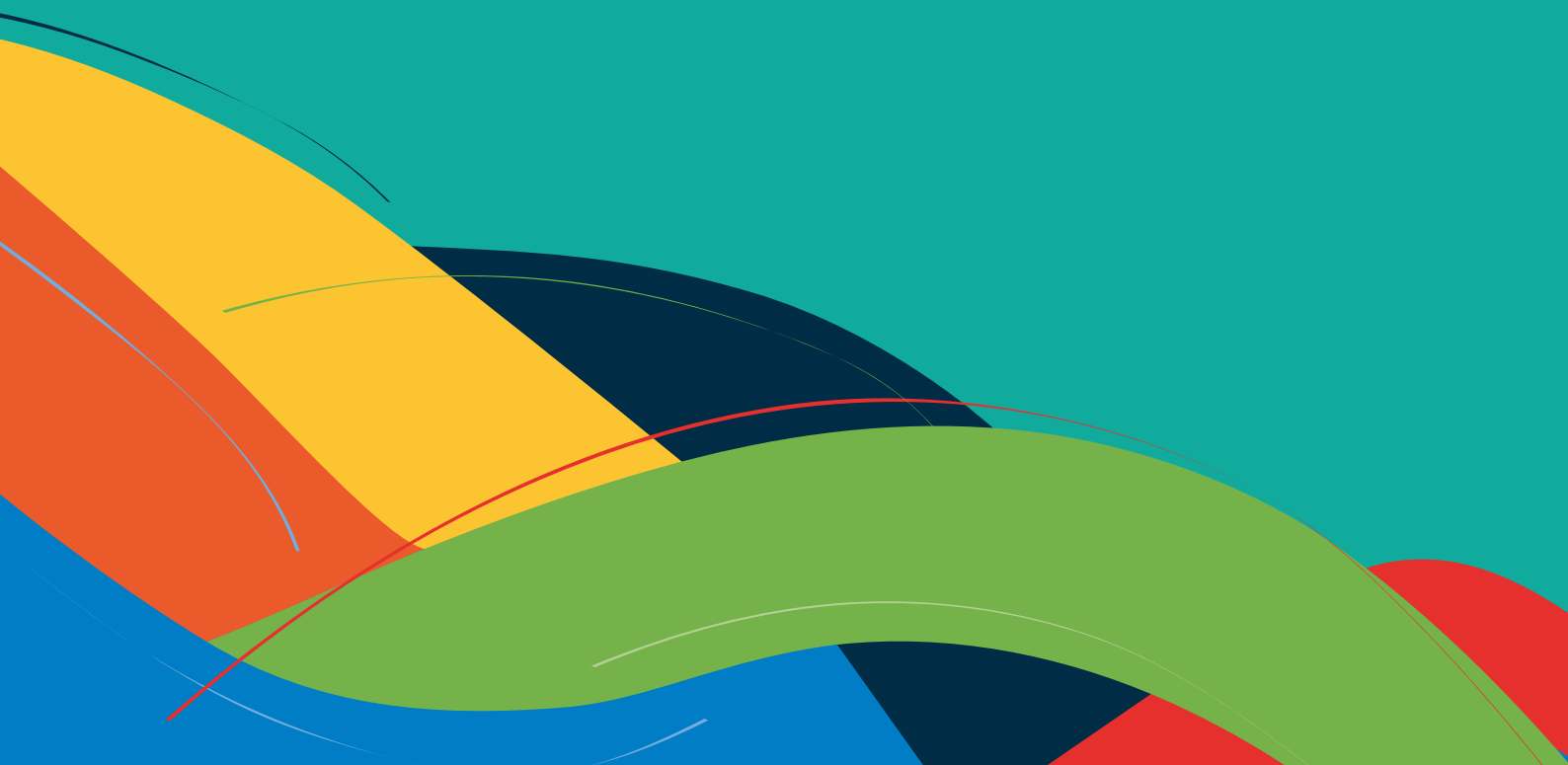
THIS WORK CAN'T BE
MEASURED BY A FINANCIAL RULER:

VOLUNTEERISM

AS A RENEWABLE RESOURCE

"This work can't be measured by a financial ruler.
We know what we are doing – we value ourselves."

—**Local volunteer,** Myanmar, SWVR field research



Volunteers organizing Nelson Mandela Day celebrations in Burundi (UNDP/Aude Rossignol, 2012).

4

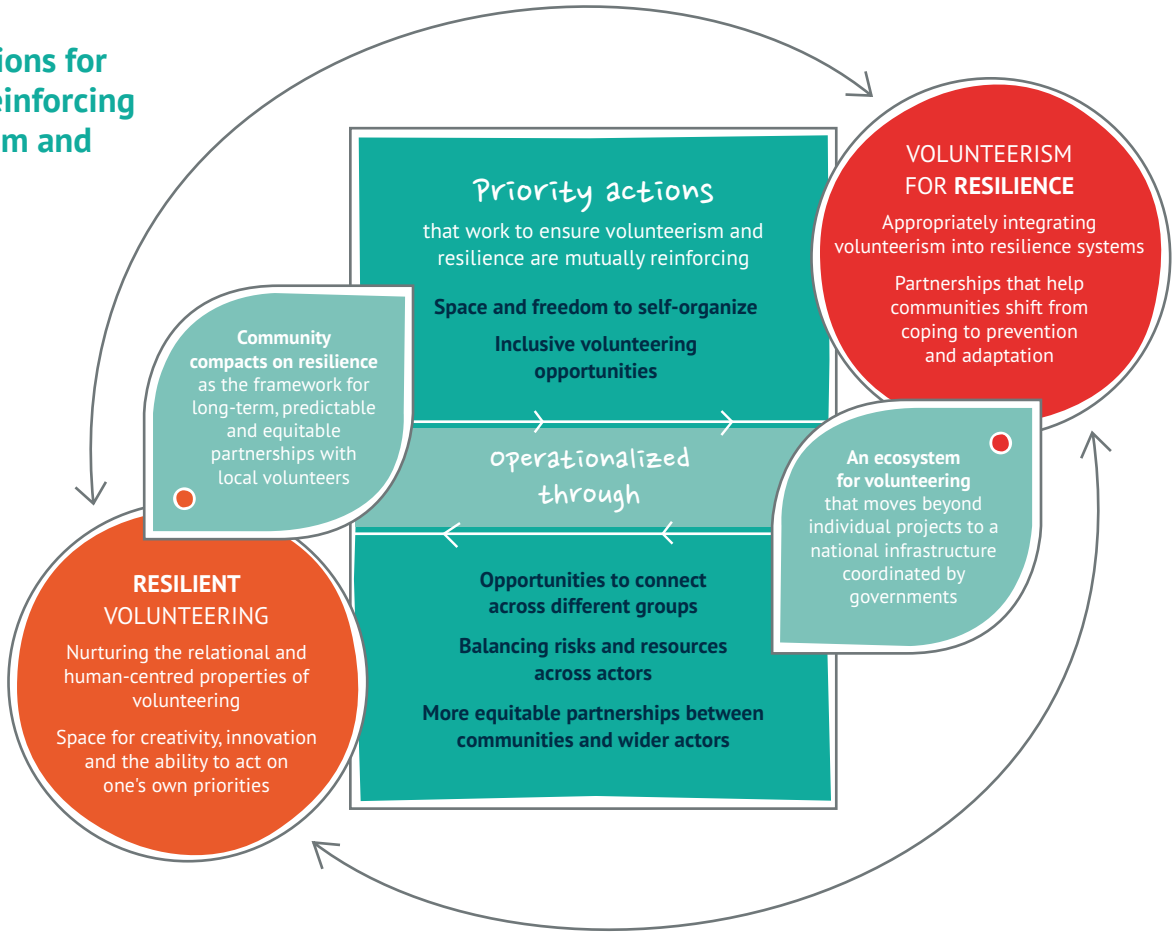
This chapter examines how all stakeholders can maximize the distinctive values of volunteerism for community resilience-building. It recognizes that volunteerism is a renewable resource only when it is well supported both as a means of creating community resilience and as a property of resilient communities. By understanding and identifying the spaces for engagement that nurture this duality, both local and external actors can maximize community resilience.

Like other forms of civic participation, volunteerism is both a means and an end of development. Previous chapters have emphasized volunteerism as a mainstay of resilience, enabling communities to cope with shocks and stresses in a variety of ways. However, the characteristics that the field research participants associated with voluntary work indicate that volunteerism is also a property of resilient communities, contributing to individual and community well-being through self-realization, shared values and common purpose.[221] This may explain the duality inherent in many characteristics of volunteerism. Voluntary action can be a renewable resource and a positive force for inclusive and equitable development.[222] However, it can also squander the resources of the most vulnerable people or be exploited by external actors to fill gaps in services that governments and other formal organizations are responsible for providing. Each characteristic of volunteerism is potentially positive or negative, depending on the context and conditions for action. Ultimately, the positive contributions of volunteerism are only maximized when its distinctive characteristics are valued and nurtured (figure 4.1).

Although many of the interventions needed to build community resilience happen at the individual, household and community levels, lasting resilience depends on how these efforts are helped or hindered by the wider context. Strengthening resilience therefore requires the

Figure **4.1**

Priority actions for mutually reinforcing volunteerism and resilience



promotion of social, political and economic structures and policies that protect people's fundamental human rights, provide access to basic services and support local community action. This chapter draws on implications from the field research to mobilize support for practices and policies that create an enabling environment for volunteering in times of protracted strain on economic and social well-being or acute crises and conflict.

The first part of the chapter focuses on how all stakeholders can foster the human-centred connections and self-organization of volunteerism as a strategic foundation for resilience. Building on the findings from chapter 2, it outlines how public and private support can construct a nationally owned ecosystem for resilient volunteering. The scale of the challenges facing many communities means that a strategic and coordinated approach by all stakeholders is required to foster local ownership and connectivity through policy, investments, recognition and support for inclusive and egalitarian forms of volunteerism. Such efforts should prioritize the concerns of marginalized and disenfranchised groups who stand to benefit least from development gains.

The second part of the chapter draws on implications from chapter 3 to identify how collaborations between communities and external actors can optimize the significant contributions of ordinary people to resilience. A new compact for community resilience would provide the framework for volunteers to join community gatekeepers in partnerships development and decision-making. It would ensure that collaborations with external actors are based on the self-determined priorities of those who are already taking action. It would

form a more equitable basis for cooperation and linkages to subnational and national resilience systems. Community compacts can support greater flexibility, plurality and diversity of relationships between community members and external actors, strengthening ties beyond existing power structures while allowing coordination and the avoidance of competition. By balancing that risk more effectively across and between actors, it would also maximize the potential for volunteerism as a pathway to empowerment of women and marginalized groups.

Finally, what brings these two features together (a national infrastructure on volunteerism and community compacts or agreements) is volunteers. Volunteers can act as a bridge between "official" and "unofficial" actors, between formal processes and informal, people-led initiatives. In resilience thinking, if how you connect is as important as what you connect to, volunteer-led structures have the potential to create the trust, flexibility and responsive ties that can evolve to reflect emerging needs.

Figure **4.2**

How to maximize volunteerism for resilience?

Scope of Chapter 4

➔ Developing an ecosystem for resilient volunteerism

While local and informal voluntary efforts can enhance community resilience, these efforts must be matched with adequate resources, capacities and incentives to be sustainable. Volunteerism must provide more than public goods under a human rights framework; it should also be a platform for greater innovation, experimentation and co-creation of responses to risk. Although volunteering is cost-effective it is not free of cost. Furthermore, the distribution of costs and benefits among individuals, groups, organizations and institutions can ultimately either counter or reinforce inequalities. Governments and other external actors need to consider the full benefits and costs of drawing on voluntary action to strengthen community resilience and to allocate resources to volunteering as a means of implementation for the SDGs.

Although volunteering is cost-effective it is not free of cost and the distribution of costs and benefits can ultimately either counter or reinforce inequalities

The starting point for building an ecosystem for resilient volunteering should be improved research and analysis of the diverse forms and benefits of volunteerism at national and subnational levels. Such analysis requires multi-stakeholder cooperation among volunteers, public authorities, the private sector and civil society actors. Objectives for investment and support should align with development strategies, priorities and plans, and thus will be context-specific. At the same time, this report demonstrates that several components are likely to be valid across all contexts, since they all to some degree foster the distinctive characteristics prioritized by the diverse communities covered in this report.

This section outlines three key ways that governments, United Nations entities and other peace and development actors can ensure that volunteers are not treated as cheap labour but are cultivated as a core attribute of resilient communities (figure 4.3).

Figure **4.3**

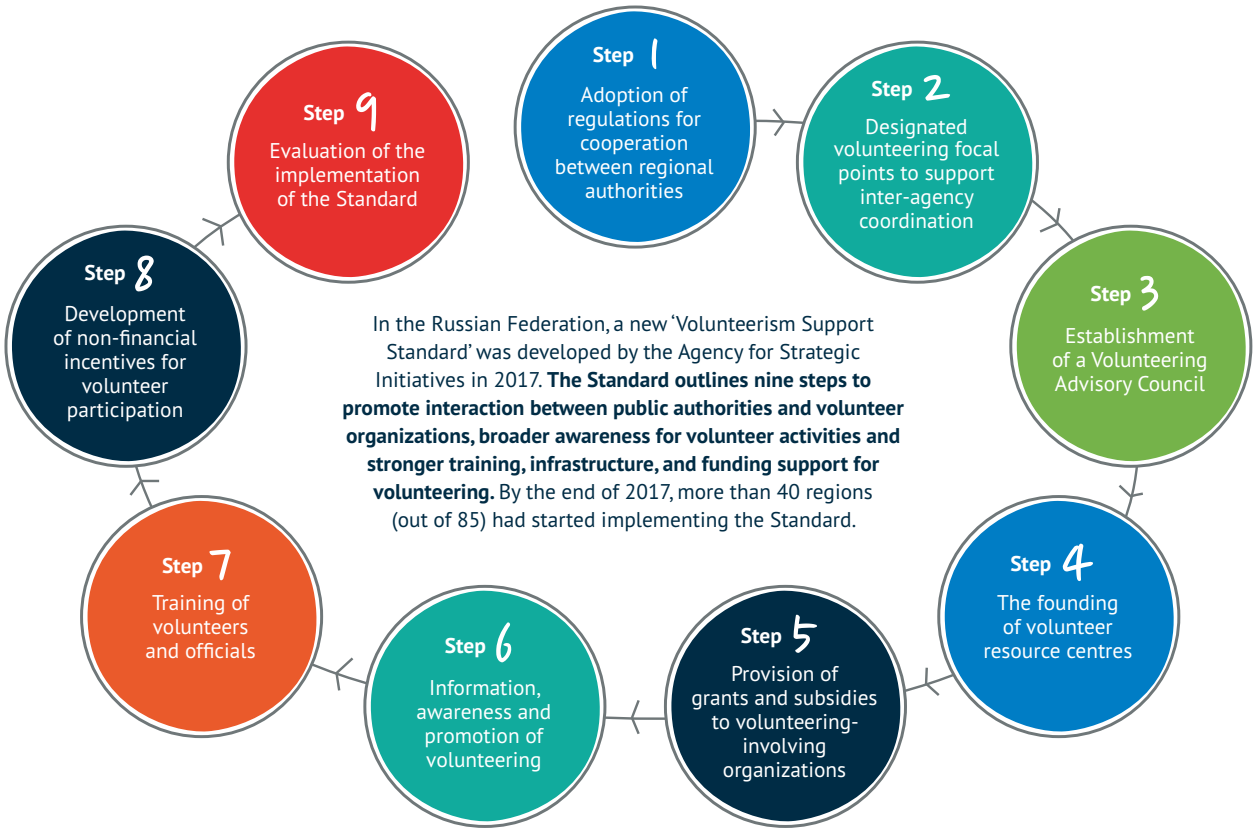
Building an ecosystem for resilience

As highlighted throughout this report, examples of each of these approaches can be found across many countries and cities around the world. Many governments and their partners continue to invest in aspects of volunteer infrastructure, policy and programming in support of national development priorities and capacities.[223] For example, in 2017 in the Russian Federation a new standard for volunteering was piloted to promote coordination and investment among stakeholders (figure 4.4).

Yet this report shows that the scale of engagement and the approach taken by governments and other stakeholders to incorporate volunteerism into their programming are often insufficient. Legislation, policies and investments need to be relevant to all types of volunteering in the context, including informal volunteerism. Policy directions and associated resourcing should be integrated across sector plans and prioritized in strategies for gender equality and inclusion. Since volunteerism is a foundational property of all communities, a piecemeal "project-by-project" approach to engaging with community-level volunteers lacks relevance. As many actors seek to localize development processes, there is the potential for competition and co-optation of the efforts of the most vulnerable. Therefore a universal, strategic and coordinated approach led by governments, embedded in mutual accountabilities between states and citizens and supported by all peace and development partners is required to sustainably support volunteering communities in a world of heightened fragility.

Figure **4.4**

'Volunteerism Support Standard', Russian Federation



In the Russian Federation, a new 'Volunteerism Support Standard' was developed by the Agency for Strategic Initiatives in 2017. **The Standard outlines nine steps to promote interaction between public authorities and volunteer organizations, broader awareness for volunteer activities and stronger training, infrastructure, and funding support for volunteering.** By the end of 2017, more than 40 regions (out of 85) had started implementing the Standard.

Source: Agency for Strategic Initiatives 2017

SUPPORTING THE SELF-ORGANIZATION OF COMMUNITIES

When self-organization is recognized as a key survival strategy for communities at risk, external engagement with volunteers can nurture that distinctive characteristic of volunteerism and bring greater visibility to people-centred processes of development.[224] In vulnerable communities, voluntary action is not only commendable but essential. Consequently, it should be viewed as more than a second-tier gap-filling option for the most marginalized community members. Rather, stakeholders can take full advantage of volunteerism's self-organizing properties by making it a central component of resilience-strengthening strategies and plans.

Public recognition is important in motivating people who voluntarily contribute their time for the public good and in enabling volunteers to gain the trust and respect of people in the community.[225,226] It can also reduce the stigmatization of volunteers in contexts where their motives may be questioned. Appreciation can range from small community-based events to large public affairs promoted by media partners, to formal legal recognition. Legal and social recognition confers legitimacy on volunteers, strengthening their sense of ownership, responsibility and duty. Public acknowledgement of the distribution of the costs of voluntary

A local volunteer speaks with young women in Rangapani village, Bangladesh, about their rights (UNV, 2015).

action, particularly in contexts where women take on the bulk of low-value and informal volunteerism, is a starting point for changes in norms as well as policy and investment decisions that can better distribute benefits and opportunities.

For resilient volunteering that does more than fill gaps, the fundamental freedoms of association and self-organization must be protected. As the 2015 SWVR argued, social action through volunteerism is likely to be most effective in societies where all people can participate in informing public policy. Self-organization is stifled in countries where people's freedom of expression and association are restricted. It is important that national and local governments and their development partners recognize the value of local voluntary action and make every effort to secure people's freedom and rights to assemble and associate, including working with customary structures to address traditional practices that infringe upon these freedoms.

Voluntary organizations can also work with other actors to create spaces for informal volunteers to come together to organize, connect and develop actions towards shared goals. The ability to convene in person or online enables different groups of people to engage with the public institutions that affect their lives or to connect across diverse social groups. As this report has shown, such opportunities are particularly important for women and youth and other vulnerable and marginalized groups to be able to come together and organize on issues that can help communities cope with adversity. Creating opportunities for people to act on their own priorities was one of the most frequently cited needs in the field research. When such opportunities are lacking, people are less connected and communities become segmented and isolated.

Creating opportunities for people to act on their own priorities was one of the most frequently cited needs in the field research

To self-organize, volunteers need improved access to information, such as access to data collected through early warning systems or from service provider performance tracking. Participatory monitoring systems involve communities in data collection and enable them to craft their own responses. Volunteers can bring crowdsourced data to communities and groups as a basis for joint action through citizen journalism or more direct means.

Done well, external support for local volunteerism can result in highly productive collaborations. Done poorly, by exercising too much control over voluntary action or by introducing competition as multiple actors move into local spaces, external support can undermine the positive contributions of volunteerism's distinctive characteristics. Overregulation can narrow diversity and access to volunteering, in effect shrinking civic space. Volunteers need to be able to respond flexibly and adapt to changing circumstances. With all this in mind, a delicate balancing act is required to draw on the scale and availability of volunteer action.[227]

NURTURING THE HUMAN CONNECTIONS CHARACTERISTIC OF LOCAL VOLUNTARY ACTION

Policies that limit people's participation in actions that affect their lives tend to reinforce social norms that sustain discrimination against underprivileged groups. Recognizing that collective voluntary action can exclude some groups, stakeholders can nurture the trust and social cohesion embedded in communities by creating more equitable standards, opportunities and incentives for inclusive local voluntary action. External actors also need to understand local power dynamics and relationships to avoid exacerbating local tensions and conflict.

Before intervening to manage risks, national and subnational governments together with development partners would be well advised to take the time to understand the DNA of a community and its volunteerism – its cultural habits and local norms for civic or social

action – so as not to undermine local cohesion. Collaborating with community mediators is one way for decision-makers to deepen their sensitivities without stirring up animosity and discord in communities wary of interventions that may alter the status quo.[228]

In addition to strengthening their own sensitivities, governments and other external actors can help to co-create equitable standards for all, fostering social cohesion and trust by proactively reducing the exclusions that can accompany voluntary action. Together with local community groups, government authorities can create standards that articulate commitments to mutual respect and inclusive practices. While volunteer organizations and movements cannot be forced to be inclusive, the principles inherent in agreed standards can guide volunteer action that first does no harm.[229,230]

In providing the space for groups to come together and self-organize, governments and others can attract and convene people from different communities to build knowledge, awareness and empathy across groups. As the case of Shughel Shabab (box 4.1) shows, volunteerism can forge new connections through positive networks and relationships that provide important off-ramps from violence.

Finally, state and non-state actors need to establish better systems for managing spontaneous volunteering in crises, which is essentially a reflection of the human need to connect and support fellow citizens. National and subnational governments would do well to anticipate spontaneous volunteers joining efforts to help in a crisis – even in circumstances where they may be unwanted – and plan for their complementary participation and integration into response efforts.[231,232] When such participation is planned for and coordinated, self-organized volunteerism can strengthen community resilience in unique ways. Furthermore, the experiences of self-organized volunteers during crises can determine whether or not they remain engaged over the long term.[233]

CREATING EMPOWERING OPPORTUNITIES FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS

Marginalized groups in isolated and rural communities having comparatively closed social systems would benefit from more equitable opportunities to engage in voluntary action. External actors can facilitate new forms of social relationships across community groups through inclusive norms and policies that extend the benefits of volunteerism to all. Legislation and organizational protocols and standards can open up opportunities

Box **4.1**

Youth volunteers as peacebuilders

Young volunteers can be positive role models and advocates for promoting peacebuilding and social cohesion within fragile communities. Young volunteers can also play a role in discussing and addressing factors such as social exclusion and cultural norms that can contribute to extremism.

In 2017, UNDP and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization launched a regional youth-led advocacy campaign known as "Shughel Shabab" in response to a United Nations Security Council resolution on youth, peace and security. It aimed to highlight youth-led initiatives, transform perceptions about young people and support them as change-makers and peacebuilders. Young volunteers from countries across the Arab States region worked together to showcase the many positive ways in which young people – many of whom are volunteers – reduce social tension and violence and repair the social fabric of communities. In 2018, the campaign will focus on developing an enabling environment for sustained youth participation.

Source: UNDP 2017

THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR A NATIONAL VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE IN KENYA

TUESDAY GICHUKI CONSULTANT, STATE DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION, KENYA

Kenyan communities have always voluntarily organized themselves, whether formally or informally, to help each other in times of need and in times of celebration. At independence, this volunteering spirit was adopted by the government of the day as "*harambee*", loosely translated as "pooling resources for community development". This spirit of *harambee* is the backbone of today's volunteerism in Kenya.

Due to a lack of legal framework and investment, volunteerism in Kenya has been inadequately documented, making it difficult to establish its contribution to society and the economy. Research on volunteerism has always focused on the social, cultural, financial and philosophical dimensions, with no known body of research covering the economic dimension.

This changed in 2015 when the Government of Kenya, in collaboration with the volunteer community, developed and adopted a National Volunteerism Policy.[g] The policy provides guidelines on efficient and effective coordination, management and sustenance of volunteerism in Kenya. In addition, it seeks to ensure that volunteerism is embedded within national economic policies. This policy enabled groundbreaking research to be undertaken, attaching economic value to volunteerism in Kenya for the first time.

In 2017, research commissioned by the State Department for Social Protection was carried out to determine the contributions of volunteer work in Kenya. The results showed that Kenyan volunteers contributed a total of 669,630,288 hours to the economy in 2016. Based on average wages in each job category where the volunteers worked, their contribution translated to approximately USD2,362,778,900 or 3.66 per cent of gross domestic product.

Improved understanding and appreciation of the economic value of volunteerism has provided momentum to further integrating voluntary efforts into national plans and policy, and to the strengthening of national infrastructure. The government has set up a National Standing Committee on Volunteerism, bringing together government departments, volunteer-involving organizations and the private sector for collective action and impact. The high-level committee is co-chaired by the Principal Secretary, State Department for Social Protection and includes representatives from volunteer-involving organizations and the private sector. The body is tasked with fast-tracking the development and implementation of volunteer support infrastructure and a legal framework for volunteerism in Kenya.

g. Government of Kenya. *National Volunteerism Policy* (2015).

for all people to contribute to helping their communities cope with adversity (box 4.2). Such frameworks can minimize the risk that more vulnerable community members will be excluded from the benefits of voluntary action or, equally, that they will be overburdened by demands to participate in less fulfilling roles. For example, some Canadian volunteer organizations use a recently developed guidebook and fact sheets on engaging people with disabilities in volunteering.[234]

External actors can facilitate new relationships across community groups through inclusive norms and policies that extend the benefits of volunteerism to all

One group active in volunteering but often excluded from decision-making is young people. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 on the inclusive representation of youth noted that a lack of leadership opportunities, protections and support for young people leave them open to a wide range of undesirable influences, including antisocial forms of engagement.[235] Conditions of conflict and poverty that leave communities desperate and vulnerable allow opportunistic criminal or extremist groups to gain a foothold among youth.[236] United Nations agencies and development organizations can address this by partnering with national and local governments to enhance youth involvement in volunteering (box 4.3). Partnerships between faith-based organizations, governments and young people can explore more constructive value-based volunteering. By helping to prevent conflict and future stresses, such efforts can go a long way towards strengthening the long-term resilience of communities.

Women, too, can benefit from more leadership and decision-making roles associated with their voluntary work. Promoting women's participation in community action committees and engaging with community leaders to address discriminatory gender norms can advance the more equitable representation of women. Also valuable are: policies and frameworks that emphasize women's leadership and meaningful participation; training and resources for women's groups and for people who work in partnership with men to enhance gender equity; and public education and awareness-raising on women's rights. External agencies can also model the value of leadership positions for women. By explicitly creating leadership opportunities for women to engage in crisis mitigation and recovery efforts, external actors can change local norms and perceptions of women's roles and challenge men's dominant role in decision-making.[237,238]

Box **4.2**

Promoting equal access through regulation

Laws and policies on volunteering should promote inclusivity and equal access. Two recent examples of this can been seen in Montenegro and Spain. In 2010 Montenegro adopted a law on volunteering that prohibits discrimination based on such characteristics as nationality, health conditions and ethnicity. Charged with implementing the law, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare produced a strategy document on the development of volunteering in Montenegro which has a chapter on policies supporting vulnerable groups in voluntary action.

In 2015 Spain passed a new law on volunteering in recognition of the fact that volunteering had changed considerably since the previous law was passed in 1996. The new law commits to "open, participatory and intergenerational" volunteering and affirms that non-discrimination (based on origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or other personal characteristics) is a fundamental principle of voluntary action.

Sources: Government of Montenegro, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare 2011; Government of Spain, Ministry of the Presidency and Territorial Administration 2015

Box **4.3**

Developing a national youth volunteering infrastructure in India

In partnership with India's Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, UNV and UNDP implemented a project in 2014–17 to strengthen India's youth volunteer programmes and facilitate youth participation in volunteering and development work. At the national level, the project included research on youth volunteering, development of training materials and the launch of an online volunteering platform in August 2017. At the local level, a national UN Volunteer was placed in a district in each of India's 29 states to coordinate needs assessments and support capacity development and expansion of youth volunteer schemes. Local programmes reached out to the most marginalized youth, including young women from minority communities and youth with disabilities.

Sources: UNV, UNDP and Indian Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports 2017

➔ Facilitating a community compact for resilience

The post-2015 development consensus emphasizes the need to bring development processes down to the local level if goals and targets are to be met. Evidence increasingly shows that cities and communities are critical levels of organization and building blocks for sustainable peace and development.[239] International actors, including the United Nations through the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review reforms,[240] are reconfiguring themselves to support national ownership of development agendas and increase domestic capacities for peace and development. Accordingly, structures and processes from the national level to the local level need revision.

How can communities be fairly positioned within this wider system? As this report has shown, communities are acting with or without a formal acknowledgement of roles and responsibilities. Local volunteers are already self-organizing to cope with a range of shocks and stresses – environmental, economic, social and conflict-related. Communities, through their voluntary efforts, have much to bring to the table. External actors need to ask how they can build on the work that is already taking place in communities and work out how they connect to volunteers' distinctive strengths for co-productive and synergistic solutions to risk.

Moving from a top-down approach to truly valuing community contributions requires a change in relationships at the boundaries of community. The scale and scope of local volunteerism suggest that community contribution and ownership need to be valued more highly. Resilience interventions can embed more collaborative governance and partnership models that enable "official actors" and citizens to work together more productively. Furthermore, power relationships within the community are a microcosm of national and international relationships. If those external relationships with communities are more equitable, people who have not traditionally benefited from development processes will become more empowered as greater value is placed on their capacities and agency to act.

One way to do this is to enter into a community compact for resilience, developed and implemented together by national, subnational and local actors (figure 4.5). Such a compact can form the basis for more equal and transparent partnerships between local volunteers and government, civil society and private sector actors, many of whom already draw on local volunteerism. A community compact for resilience empowers community volunteers by having agreement on roles and priorities with wider actors, including local governments, and it more equitably shares and manages risks. All parties can articulate

their commitments to maintaining agreed standards, being accountable and meeting expectations. In return, communities can be required to adopt inclusive practices where needed. Community compacts can also articulate the commitments that local governance bodies and other higher authorities make, including providing resources, technical assistance and other incentives to participate in the compact.

Given the range of different national, subnational and community contexts, this report does not provide a detailed blueprint for community compacts, as each one would be influenced by existing governance and administrative arrangements within and beyond communities. Rather, research for this report points to some key principles for consideration in the development of such agreements or partnerships:

Figure **4.5**

A community compact for resilience

STRENGTHEN KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL VOLUNTEERISM TO IMPROVE COMPLEMENTARITY

When volunteering is valued for its distinctive contributions beyond gap filling, a community's resilience ecosystem is greatly enhanced and volunteerism is integrated appropriately into wider systems and programmes. However, real integration that achieves the full potential of local volunteerism as a renewable resource requires that volunteers work productively alongside other resilience partners – and not just in ad-hoc projects and programmes. As previously noted, in reality, support and capacity-building for truly locally led efforts are rarely included in resilience planning. Research from this report suggests that "official" actors at all levels, from government to civil society and the private sector, have limited understanding of the DNA of community-led efforts and that volunteering is not yet widely recognized as a core strategy for strengthening peace and development initiatives.

A local volunteer teaches children how to recycle waste in Xinzhuang village in Beijing, China (UNV, 2018).

These hindrances to effective partnerships with communities could be improved by gathering information on volunteers' distinctive contributions, by asking communities themselves, and using this as the starting point for collaboration. Improving complementarity requires a multi-level approach to building knowledge and intelligence on local volunteerism, its limits and thresholds and its support requirements in the face of shocks and stresses.

In the first instance, communities and partners need to share information and enter into dialogue that recognizes local efforts and explores avenues for support and partnership. This report proposes a methodology based on an approach used by the IFRC for community learning and dialogue after disasters (box 4.4). Authorities and communities can use such a methodology to improve systems for resilience by adopting recommendations informed by the unique weaknesses revealed by crises.

Based on improved data, partnerships with communities would be co-created, building on local capacities and priorities rather than adversely incorporating the labour of local volunteers or simply working in parallel with local efforts.

Given the resources required to undertake such dialogue and collaboration between actors as a basis for partnerships, volunteer-led structures can play a critical and cost-effective facilitation role. In the context of resilience-building, structures often need to expand, contract or change shape over time to address new and emerging risks. The flexibility inherent in volunteer-led configurations allows them to evolve more easily in line with emerging needs. Acting as intermediaries, volunteers can build bridges of trust to relay

When volunteering is valued for its distinctive contributions beyond gap filling, a community's resilience ecosystem is greatly enhanced

Box **4.4**

A participatory methodology for developing a community compact for resilience

When major shocks disrupt community systems, they expose weaknesses but also create opportunities for improvement. During post-disaster evaluations conducted by the IFRC, volunteers and vulnerable people from affected communities are interviewed about their experiences and the outcomes of the IFRC response. Using an equity lens, the process helps stakeholders to understand the effects of shocks and stresses on a variety of standards: inclusiveness (no one left behind); the participation of women and minority groups in decisions (gender and diversity); respect for local values and knowledge (community dignity and participation); and unintended consequences (do no harm). Feedback from community members informs recommendations for mitigating, strengthening or changing the particular system weaknesses revealed by the shock, and evaluations typically conclude with a management response designed to improve operations.

Stakeholders could apply similar principles by establishing a dialogue between community volunteers, local governments and external responders, the results of which could then be incorporated into a compact. Such dialogue can lead to context-specific recommendations for improving community systems based on the weaknesses revealed by the shock, and it can inform agreements in terms of future ways of working between communities and other partners.

What would this process achieve in terms of community resilience and volunteering?

- Volunteers become recognized focal points, key informants and reliable agents of change in collaborations with external actors, and they are better prepared to collaborate when new shocks arise (community preparedness).
- Trust is reinforced and nurtured, thereby improving the human connection between volunteers and external actors (connectedness).
- Trust feeds into stronger expectations, which, if conditions of the enabling environment align, can result in a social compact between community volunteers and governments or formal agencies (social capital).
- Working together, communities and external actors co-design strategies to strengthen systemic weaknesses revealed by the shock (community participation and empowerment).

With collaborative arrangements established, new processes can be generalized to other communities, leading to organic improvements in government systems and evidence-based policies tailored to the local context.

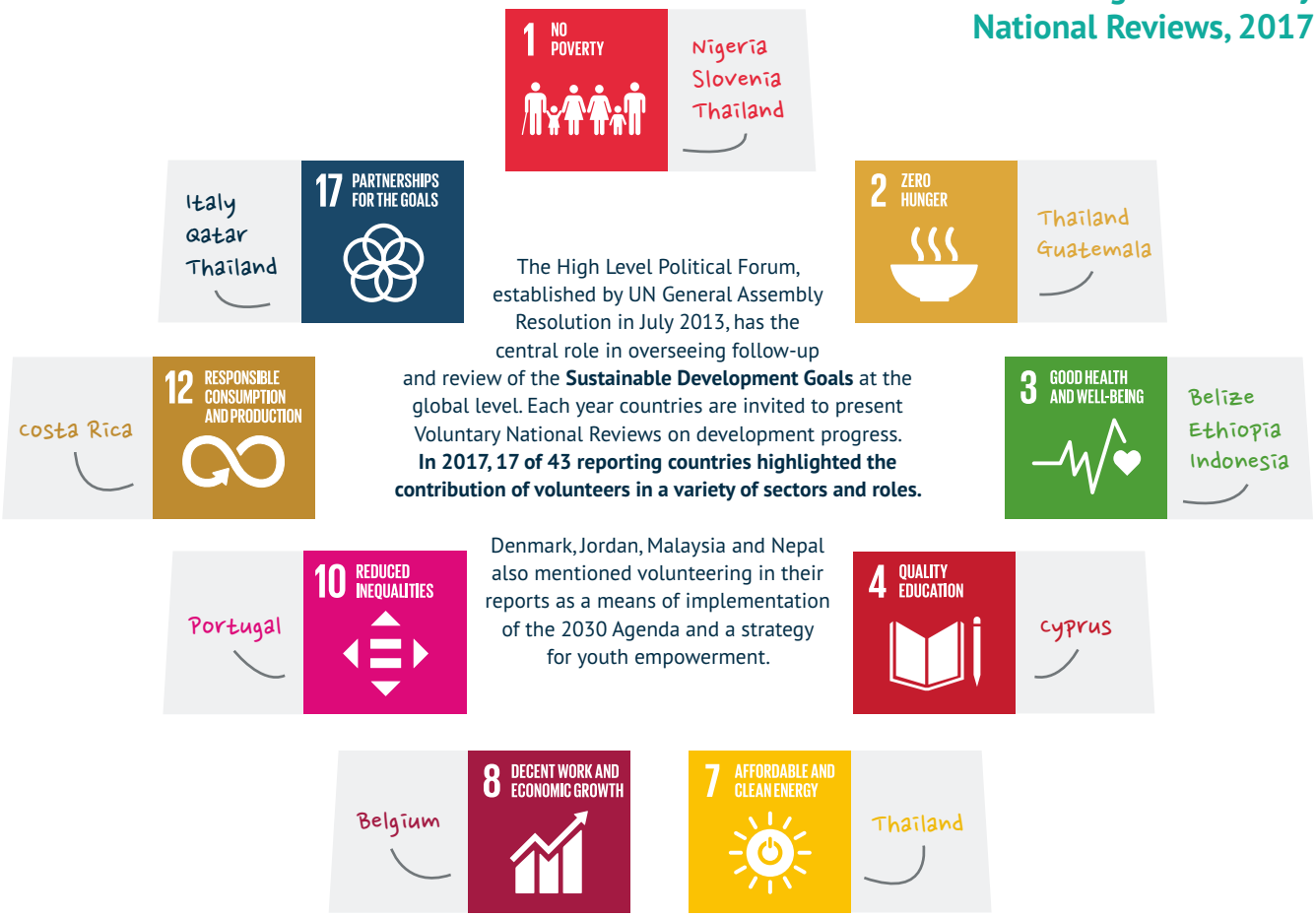
Source: Gabriel Pictet, SWVR Expert Advisory Group.

important information between technical agencies and community-based groups.[241] Field research for this report yielded multiple examples of community-based and national and international volunteers acting as key connectors, conveying information between community groups and higher-level NGOs and government agencies. Governments and their partners have the potential to support, and benefit from, the scaling up of such structures and mechanisms rooted in the leadership capacities of volunteers.

Beyond gathering community-specific knowledge, researchers and statistical agencies also need to systematically collect data on volunteering from the community level up to the international level. Governments and United Nations agencies can foster cooperation and exchange between research institutions, data centres and universities by creating incentives and opportunities to build the evidence base on volunteering, especially in fragile countries and vulnerable communities. Governments can also highlight the contributions of volunteers by recording their activities in their Voluntary National Reviews on development progress (figure 4.6). Publicly recognizing the work of volunteers can help fill knowledge gaps on volunteering for resilience-building in low- and middle-income countries by promoting learning and sharing examples across national actors.

Figure **4.6**

The contribution of volunteers according to Voluntary National Reviews, 2017



Furthermore, to build on national experiences and to accelerate the sharing of knowledge and practice on volunteerism between United Nations Member States and development partners, UNV, IFRC and others are consolidating learning and experiences from Member States and development partners to expand the menu of options for engaging with volunteerism through the plan of action (box 4.5).

BUILD MULTIPLE AND DIVERSE CONNECTIONS WITH COMMUNITIES BASED ON PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Under the 2030 Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement on climate change, development, peacebuilding and humanitarian actors are encouraged to form more meaningful relationships with local communities that link priorities on the ground to wider systemic efforts. True engagement and collaboration require a deeper commitment to participatory approaches than merely shifting activities down to the local level.

Box **4.5**

Integrating volunteering into peace and development: the plan of action for the next decade and beyond, 2016–2030

United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/129, adopted in November 2015, presents a plan of action for United Nations Member States to integrate volunteerism into their peace and development agendas over the next decade and beyond. It forms the basis for governments, volunteer organizations, academia and the private sector to create volunteer-involving solutions under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The three main areas of engagement are:

- strengthening people's ownership of the development agenda through enhanced civic engagement;
- integrating volunteerism into national and global strategies and plans; and
- measuring volunteerism and its impact for a holistic understanding of people and their well-being.

Stakeholders will come together under the plan of action to share evidence and experience through regional meetings in 2019 and at a global technical meeting on volunteerism in 2020. As a first step, countries are undertaking national situational analyses on volunteerism for development that will be shared in the next Secretary-General's report on volunteerism in December 2018.

Source: UNGA 2015a (A/70/129)

A community compact would expand decision-making beyond traditional power structures and give those already taking action a role in planning and agreeing partnerships. As this report has shown, volunteers are drivers of action in their communities and have important resources to bring to the table which should not be co-opted by others, including their own community leadership structures. Valuing and recognizing volunteer contributions can help bring less represented voices into debates and decisions, enhancing grassroots decision-making, accountability and ownership. Structuring partnerships and agreements around concrete manifestations of local agency rather than treating communities as passive, homogenous and unified entities means that collaborations can more effectively draw on diverse networks of local knowledge to produce locally appropriate solutions that work in the interests of the most vulnerable. Nurturing horizontal connections between volunteer groups and developing vertical networks between these groups and higher-level actors enables knowledge, skills and resources to flow both up and down as well as laterally to inform interventions in ways that are qualitatively richer than simple administrative linkages.

True engagement and collaboration require a deeper commitment to participatory approaches than merely shifting activities down to the local level

When these connections are developed and valued through explicitly articulated compacts, stakeholders gain access to dense networks of volunteers to bolster system resilience through monitoring, data collection and analysis activities that feed into larger response systems. Technology offers new opportunities for volunteers to strengthen risk and threat intelligence systems through real-time vertical information flows. Internet connectivity also allows a much wider network of volunteers to address problems and challenges outside of their fixed localities. Increasing community access to the internet, open-source software and social media enable volunteers to use mobile phone technology, crowdsourcing and geolocation to feed information back into wider resilience-strengthening systems.[242] A web of connections is created, strengthening ties while allowing the flexibility and plurality of options needed to deal with shocks and stresses.

BALANCE RISKS THROUGH A FAIR DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES TO SUPPORT LOCAL EFFORTS

The most resilient systems spread risk across an integrated system of nested actors.[243] Research for this report suggests that better alignment across a hierarchical division of

Local leaders meet to discuss community priorities in Guatemala (UNV/Mariano Salazar, 2018).

responsibility is needed to ensure that voluntary efforts are integrated and supported by equitable resources. Communities should be visualized as the building blocks of resilience, with external actors prepared to intervene and support voluntary efforts when local capacities are exceeded.[244]

As evidenced throughout this report, volunteers will often respond and engage even without the commitment of external resources to support their efforts. While this may be a way for governments and humanitarian organizations to shift costs temporarily, it is not

Box **4.6**

Online platform serves urban volunteers in Indonesia

Indorelawan, Indonesia's first online volunteering platform (www.indorelawan.org), connects volunteers with short- and long-term opportunities to volunteer, usually with local civil society organizations. Launched in 2014, it aims to meet the demand of large numbers of urban residents who want to volunteer but cannot find opportunities. As its director, Marsya Anggia Nashahta, confirmed: "The founders recognized that urban citizens were willing to help those who needed it as long as there was an opportunity to do so". Indorelawan also advocates for volunteerism to become an integral part of Indonesian life and for the stronger involvement of NGOs and volunteer-involving organizations in national development strategies. Indorelawan offers capacity development training for volunteer-involving organizations and customizes corporate volunteering programmes for private sector companies.

Source: The Jakarta Post, 2014

a sustainable solution. Equitable solutions require a distribution of resources that reflects the responsibilities held by local communities and is embedded in mutually accountable relationships between communities and others. One way to achieve this is to decentralize resources. Although devolving funding to the national level is a helpful step, effective support of local volunteers requires devolving resources to the local level.[245,246] This may require donors to revise their approaches and/or to empower local voluntary organizations while ensuring compliance with reporting and accountability standards.

Another finding of this report is that devolving responsibility to local volunteer groups does not automatically increase the participation and empowerment of vulnerable people. Power imbalances within communities limit the participation of marginalized groups – including poor women, youth and people with disabilities – in decision-making roles (box 4.7). Likewise, power imbalances between communities and external actors limit the uptake of volunteers' local knowledge. Stakeholders need to empower local volunteering through the downward redistribution of power to ensure that resources are commensurate with volunteers' responsibilities. In one example of such an effort, local and national NGOs in Kenya recently collaborated to establish the Network for Empowered Aid Response, which aims to support local voluntary action and devolve power and funding to local groups.[247]

As expressed by the communities that participated in this research, one potential impediment to voluntary action is the fear that it may compete with or replace public services. While immediate inputs from local volunteers are critical in coping with acute risks, such inputs should not take the place of more sustainable longer-term support and adaptation mechanisms. The *Human Development Report 2014* recognizes decent jobs, universal social services and social safety nets as critical foundations for sustainable resilience. Volunteering at the community level cannot compensate for absent social protection mechanisms and longer-term investments in macro-level infrastructure. Furthermore, universal services provide an equal starting point to enable inclusive volunteering. To safeguard the distinctive characteristics of volunteering that contribute to community resilience, governments must ensure that voluntary action does not replace the state services required to protect people when times are hard.

Box **4.7**

Breaking down access barriers for Australian volunteers with disabilities

In May 2015, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Julie Bishop, launched a strategy known as Development for All 2015–2020: Strategy for Strengthening Disability-Inclusive Development in Australia's Aid Program, which recognizes that failure to account for the needs of people with disabilities undermines efforts to drive inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Volunteering can capacitate and empower people with disabilities while unleashing their unique skills to help others. However, people with disabilities – estimated by the World Health Organization to be 15 per cent of the world's population – face multiple physical, cultural and legal barriers to volunteering. One barrier faced by people with disabilities in Australia is that the Disability Support Pension (DSP) has eligibility requirements that make it difficult for people receiving this support to volunteer internationally, including restrictions on travel outside of Australia for more than 28 days. Scope Global, an Australian specialist project management company, created the Disability Empowerment Skills Exchange to provide overseas volunteering opportunities under the Australian Volunteers for International Development programme that fit within the restrictions of the DSP. This pilot programme has not only allowed people supported by the DSP to volunteer but it has also given important momentum to advocacy efforts to reform the DSP by raising awareness of the impact these restrictions have.

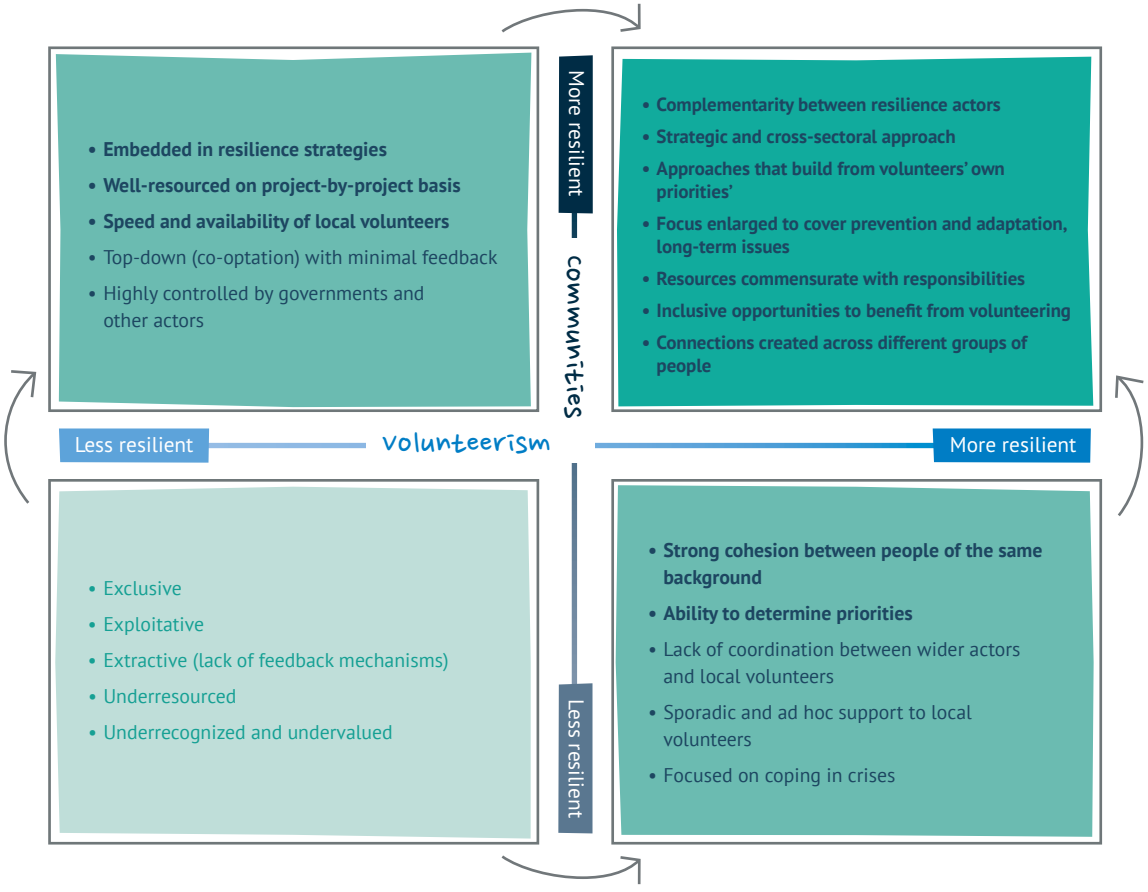
Sources: Scope Global 2016; World Health Organization 2011

Finally, development, peacebuilding and humanitarian actors supporting voluntary action need to look beyond immediate shocks and crises and rebalance their investments and inputs towards more long-term adaptation activities. By strengthening capacities for local voluntary action, the projected time span for a community's resilience in the face of crisis increases. Agreements with communities that help to predict and plan investments in capacities to prepare for future crises need to recognize that volunteerism is both a mechanism for strengthening resilience and a property of resilient communities, with the added advantage of mitigating volunteer burnout among vulnerable groups. As supporting institutions bolster long-term resilience by investing in preparation, prevention and adaptation efforts, they can also draw on local volunteer capacity to anticipate and prepare for new crises (figure 4.7).

Collaborative governance approaches recognize the need to avoid competition between informal and formal institutions, rather, interventions need to create the conditions in which they can be beneficially linked. Under the 2030 Agenda, the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships is emphasized, incorporating private sector, faith-based institutions, traditional and cultural mechanisms as well as social movements. Norms and behaviours such as ownership, agency and collaboration are recognized as critical to delivering on the post-2015 consensus, yet national, regional and international policy and investment have not

Figure **4.7**

Optimizing the relationship between volunteerism and resilience



A volunteer presents some recommendations for volunteer support at an SWVR Policy Challenge held in Sudan (UNV Sudan, 2018).

kept pace with the 'harder' components of development infrastructure. The 2030 Agenda requires the transition from a two-dimensional approach to the fully three-dimensional development era where people are no longer seen as beneficiaries but as active participants in global change.

Many of the recommendations in this chapter point to the need for investments that recognize and empower volunteers as a core component of resilient communities (table 4.1). This calls for a fundamental change in the scale and scope of current investment priorities in local communities. Without equitable investments that match the responsibilities assumed by volunteers, the resilience of communities will be eroded over time as resources are depleted. By recognizing and valuing volunteerism as a social behaviour embedded in human relationships, humanitarian, development and peace actors can tailor incentives and programmes to leverage people's participation, autonomy and ownership. At the same time, new compacts for co-creation between volunteers and wider actors provide an opportunity to reconfigure relationships, empowering local and unofficial actors traditionally positioned at the bottom of the resilience hierarchy. By anchoring local volunteerism within wider systems, it can remain both a renewable resource and an enduring property of resilient communities.

Table 4.1

Recommendations to ensure that volunteerism remains a renewable resource for communities

Nurturing a renewable resource: an ecosystem for resilient volunteerism

- Build context-specific knowledge and evidence about the contribution of local volunteerism to link with national or subnational development strategies and plans for resilience-building.
- Reward and recognize contributions by local volunteers to strengthen their motivation and increase their sense of ownership and responsibility.
- Create more equitable standards, opportunities and incentives to empower vulnerable groups to become involved in local action.
- Expand leadership opportunities through volunteerism, particularly for women, youth and marginalized groups.
- Allow voluntary groups sufficient freedom and autonomy to avoid co-opting and undermining volunteerism's distinctive self-organizing and connective properties.
- Create focal points and meeting places for minority and other marginalized groups to coordinate voluntary action on issues and priorities that can help communities cope.
- Provide specific investments to allow people from different backgrounds and groups, particularly in conflict or post-conflict contexts, to volunteer together.

Building from within: a community compact for resilience

- Encourage flexible, volunteer-led structures at subnational and national levels to facilitate dialogue between communities and wider actors on resilience priorities.
- Build collaborations on resilience that recognize the substantial self-organizing contributions of communities – for example, community compacts between communities and wider actors.
- Decentralize resources to reflect the balance of responsibilities held by local communities.
- Embed more equitable relationships and mutual accountabilities between communities and wider actors as they collaborate on resilience-building.
- Create predictable and long-term partnerships with communities that help rebalance resource investments towards prevention and adaptation.
- Address perceptions of volunteering as substitutive and competitive by ensuring that public services and safety nets are maintained in the face of shocks and stresses.

CONCLUSION

WEAVING NEW PATTERNS OF RESILIENCE

"People who have money in town may solve problems by paying money, but we solve problems through cooperating because we are not rich."

– **Research participant**, Sri Lanka, SWVR field research

"We need more sensitization of people and of administrations about volunteerism and its importance, particularly in times of crisis. With more resources and more results, we could mute our critics."

– **Focus group participants**, Burundi, SWVR field research

"Because of the crisis and the multiple problems, Athens has become vulnerable to all these problems but it has also become an empty canvas open to any kind of solutions. And this has led to an increasing number of volunteer initiatives that aim to resolve the problems and start from people that are doing it in an informal, invisible, unexpected, and sometimes even unconscious, spontaneous way. So Athens has become an empty canvas where people improvise more often than we think."

– **Research participant**, Greece, SWVR field research

A local volunteer supports the rebuilding efforts in Tacloban, Philippines, in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan (UNV, 2015).

Volunteerism is the thread that connects individuals, enabling them to work together for the good of their communities. Experiencing persistent conflict and stresses, inequitable resourcing and underdeveloped capacities, local and informal volunteers on the frontlines are struggling to keep pace with complex risks. Investments in voluntary action by governments and development partners can prevent communities from fraying at the seams. Collaborations that understand and nurture local capacities can help transform volunteerism from a coping strategy to a strategic resource for prevention and adaptation. And new partnerships with communities can strengthen the potential of volunteerism to more meaningfully include vulnerable groups in development processes.

In response to the global consensus on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, this report makes the case that vulnerable people are not waiting for outsiders to rush in and save them when times are hard. Under strain, local actors marshal the limited time and resources at their disposal to cope with challenges and risks. But external actors can safeguard this natural human resource as a core property of resilient communities by balancing their external support with the autonomy required for self-organized voluntary action to thrive. Governments, humanitarian organizations and development actors can leverage the distinctive skills, indigenous knowledge and goodwill of volunteers as partners in the "bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path."[248] This is the potential of volunteering: to contribute to long-term and sustainable solutions to the difficult problems of our time.

Local volunteerism is a fundamental resilience strategy and a core property of resilient communities

By critically appraising the complex channels through which voluntary action strengthens or inhibits community resilience, this report offers further evidence that people-centred solutions are a core element of broader development solutions. The lessons drawn out in this report point to a strong justification for strengthening voluntary action in the context of conflict, unemployment, natural disasters, environmental degradation and other shocks and stresses. The flexibility, availability and speed of voluntary action fortify the capacities needed by communities to bounce back – and even to "bounce back better" by transforming themselves in the process. Resilience is strengthened only when the participation of all people is nurtured and supported.

Local volunteerism can both boost and diminish community resilience

In situations of stress and crisis, the distinctive characteristics of volunteerism can help communities learn and innovate by self-organizing and by building stronger relationships that enhance trust and cohesiveness. Volunteerism also creates channels for local knowledge feedback; strengthens local ownership, solidarity and inclusive participation; and allows communities to respond swiftly to proximate crises. At the same time, under certain conditions volunteering can be exclusive, burdensome, short-term and of limited effectiveness. This potential duality of volunteering means that the manner in which governments and other actors engage with it is critical in maximizing volunteerism's most positive characteristics.

Volunteerism is important for vulnerable groups, yet it is not always inclusive

People who are struggling the most, for example, those living in poverty, those in isolated and rural areas and disadvantaged groups in urban environments, also bear the heaviest share of the burden in terms of coping with risks. In the absence of other forms of social protection, these cohorts are often obliged to engage in voluntary cooperation as they react to cyclical or recurring shocks and stresses. These inequities in the state of the world's volunteerism in 2018 require nuanced responses, and they have major implications for how national and international actors can help communities strengthen their resilience.

Under the 2030 Agenda there is often an implicit assumption that "going local" will automatically address marginalization and open up pathways to empowerment. Although the potential benefits of localized, voluntary and people-centred approaches to development are abundant, this report calls for a new urgency in ensuring that inclusive standards receive greater prominence in discussions of community resilience. Only in this way can voluntary action become an equitable means of coping with risks to people's lives and livelihoods.

Local volunteerism must be nurtured by mainstream development strategies

Governments and development partners can learn from communities' own reflections on volunteering as a starting point for people-centred collaborations at the local level. Rooted in systems that have historically engaged volunteers largely as unpaid human labour, development, peacebuilding and humanitarian interventions have not generally placed volunteers at the centre of mainstream development strategies. That approach has failed to support the agency, self-organization, local knowledge and relationship-building capacity of local volunteers as critical actors in building on and nurturing community resilience.

As many peace and development actors work to support localization under the 2030 Agenda, they are encouraged to do so in ways which respect and nurture the most distinctive and valuable contributions of volunteerism, avoiding co-optation and competition with voluntary actors in local spaces. National and local authorities have an essential role in this to ensure the protection of local capacities through the effective coordination of wider actors as they draw on the valuable contributions provided by voluntary groups.

Volunteerism cannot take the place of public investment in resilience-building

Voluntary action has its limits in meeting the chronic needs of vulnerable communities, and integrating volunteerism into wider resilience systems calls for more mindful appreciation of its added value in relation to other types of interventions. Volunteerism cannot, and should not, substitute for public investment, particularly in communities that lack access to the core building blocks of resilience – decent jobs, universal services and social safety nets. In times of austerity, there may be a temptation for governments and other institutions to rely on volunteerism far beyond the self-supporting capacities of communities to provide it sustainably. Evidence suggests that engaging volunteers in this way is neither effective nor sustainable and in fact works against community resilience.

An enabling environment for volunteerism strengthens community resilience

In fragile states, a patchwork of informal institutions and social networks emerge when formal institutions fail. Collective action is shaped as much by informal processes as by formal ones, and volunteering lies at the heart of such action. A step change in approach is required with new investments and partnerships ensuring strategic collaboration across diverse actors by:

- **Nurturing a national ecosystem for resilient volunteerism** that aligns with national development priorities and plans and broadens access to the benefits of volunteering for the most marginalized groups. In doing so, the divide between "official" and "unofficial" actors is broken down, allowing the contributions of ordinary people to be maximized through the innovation, flexibility and of course huge time and effort provided by citizens every day to address the development challenges they face.

- **Enabling more equitable partnerships between communities and wider actors** on resilience-building through community compacts or agreements. By formally recognizing the scale and scope of contributions through local volunteerism, such compacts or agreements would see local and national authorities give more weight to the voices of community volunteers in decision-making within resilience planning. This would form the basis for more effective joint initiatives between communities and wider stakeholders and enable a decentralization of resources, with a focus on more predictable investments for prevention and adaptation. A plurality of relationships between local volunteers and other communities, actors and organizations would help weave a more resilient network of relationships that goes beyond the limitations of traditional and top-down power structures. Embedding standards and principles for inclusion would also help foster more equitable divisions of responsibilities within and across communities.

Used as a cheap and proximal resource, local volunteerism is unlikely to be sustainable, especially as the burden of community coping is disproportionately borne by those least able to do so. This report provides an alternative vision for government and their development partners – one where the contribution of volunteerism as a property of resilient communities is maximized.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 Key terms

VOLUNTEERISM, VOLUNTEERING AND VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

A wide range of activities undertaken of free will, for the general public good, for which monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor (UNGA 2002).

FORMAL VOLUNTEERING

Voluntary activity undertaken through an organization; typified by volunteers making an ongoing or sustained commitment to an organization and contributing their time on a regular basis (UNV 2015a, p. xxv).

INFORMAL VOLUNTEERING

Voluntary activities done directly, unmediated by any formal organization that coordinates larger-scale volunteer efforts (UNV 2015a, p. xxv).

COMMUNITY

A group of people who may or may not live within the same area, village or neighbourhood; who may or may not share similar culture, habits and resources; and who are exposed to the same threats and risks, such as disease, political and economic issues, and natural disasters (IFRC 2014, p. 10).

RESILIENCE

An inherent as well as acquired condition achieved by managing risks over time at the individual, household, community and societal levels in ways that minimize costs, build capacity to manage and sustain development momentum, and maximize transformative potential (UNDP 2013, p. 34).

ANNEX 2

Volunteering by country

The global estimates used in this report are extrapolated from data on formal volunteering from 62 countries and from data on informal volunteering from 40 countries (see UNV 2018a for further details).

Table A2.1 **Volunteering by country, 2016** (or closest year available)*

Country or territory	Population ages 15 or older	Formal volunteering (full-time equivalent)			Informal volunteering (full-time equivalent)			Total volunteering (full-time equivalent)			Source**	
		Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Formal	Informal
Argentina	20,401,738	121,310	53,426	67,884	343,831	114,280	229,552	465,141	167,706	297,435	a	a
Armenia	2,107,000	8,352	3,946	4,406	18,207	6,365	11,842	26,559	10,311	16,248	a	a
Australia	19,263,000	422,330	144,218	278,111	532,651	205,769	326,882	954,981	349,987	604,993	a	a
Austria	7,246,000	233,961	138,374	95,587	200,141	78,579	121,562	434,102	216,953	217,149	b	f
Belgium	9,329,000	130,000	89,554	40,446	–	–	–	130,000	89,554	40,446	b	f
Brazil	44,460,000	535,048	227,009	308,039	1,165,018	332,975	832,043	1,700,066	559,985	1,140,081	a	f
Bulgaria	6,172,000	7,909	3,736	4,172	191,998	92,360	99,639	199,907	96,096	103,811	a	a
Cameroon	12,345,286	24,887	13,846	11,041	306,766	134,004	172,762	331,653	147,850	183,803	e	a
Canada	29,280,000	1,111,818	485,003	626,815	931,348	366,102	565,246	2,043,166	851,105	1,192,061	e	a
Chile	14,344,000	164,864	69,948	94,916	375,866	107,427	268,440	540,730	177,375	363,355	a	a
China	1,132,960,000	3,913,290	1,961,151	1,952,139	7,826,580	3,922,303	3,904,277	11,739,870	5,883,454	5,856,416	e	e
Colombia	34,310,000	474,362	151,457	322,905	899,050	256,959	642,092	1,373,412	408,416	964,996	e	a
Croatia	3,586,000	29,412	13,896	15,516	116,463	57,281	59,182	145,875	71,177	74,698	c	a
Cyprus	676,000	18,615	6,631	11,984	19,082	8,550	10,531	37,697	15,181	22,516	c	f
Czech Republic	8,936,000	26,413	12,479	13,934	290,215	142,739	147,476	316,628	155,218	161,410	e	a
Denmark	4,714,000	114,187	79,129	35,058	160,328	90,200	70,128	274,515	169,329	105,186	e	a
Egypt	60,664,000	17,335	6,175	11,161	1,712,398	767,312	945,086	1,729,734	773,487	956,247	d	f
Estonia	1,100,000	8,130	3,841	4,289	35,725	19,596	16,129	43,855	23,437	20,418	e	e
Ethiopia	11,354,772	40,484	22,524	17,960	235,482	129,254	106,228	275,966	151,778	124,188	c	a
Finland	4,562,000	85,165	47,509	37,656	107,372	47,743	59,629	192,537	95,252	97,285	d	f
France	52,578,000	1,072,000	604,626	467,374	1,817,327	452,181	1,365,146	2,889,327	1,056,806	1,832,520	d	f
Germany	70,070,000	1,405,981	828,649	577,332	1,941,587	892,394	1,049,193	3,347,568	1,721,043	1,626,525	c	f
Ghana	16,751,141	57,899	36,600	21,299	810,590	436,370	374,221	868,490	472,970	395,520	e	a
Greece	9,247,000	194,891	104,353	90,538	217,639	88,006	129,633	412,530	192,358	220,171	e	e
Hungary	8,252,000	11,315	6,673	4,642	208,418	79,257	129,161	219,733	85,930	133,803	e	a
India	805,087,343	2,254,104	1,523,331	730,773	3,273,742	1,587,303	1,686,439	5,527,846	3,110,634	2,417,212	e	a
Iran, Islamic Republic of	59,022,000	535,604	190,783	344,821	476,014	236,700	239,313	1,011,618	427,484	584,135	b	f
Ireland	3,612,000	59,920	33,158	26,761	72,353	29,257	43,096	132,273	62,416	69,857	e	e
Israel	6,000,000	38,039	13,550	24,490	169,366	75,891	93,474	207,405	89,441	117,964	f	a
Italy	52,070,000	597,390	283,905	313,486	1,075,634	318,340	757,294	1,673,024	602,245	1,070,780	d	a
Japan	110,770,000	1,051,237	544,046	507,191	801,560	467,551	334,009	1,852,797	1,011,596	841,201	d	f
Kenya	24,528,927	113,873	63,356	50,517	609,516	266,253	343,263	723,389	329,609	393,780	c	f
Korea, Republic of	43,017,000	249,472	34,101	215,372	63,180	36,853	26,327	312,652	70,953	241,699	e	f
Kyrgyzstan	4,079,000	3,055	1,443	1,612	132,474	65,156	67,318	135,529	66,599	68,930	e	e

– not available.
* Variances are due to rounding for the purposes of this table.
** Key to sources:
a. Based on time use survey data and population data for ages 15 years and older.
b. Based on data from the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project.
c. Based on time projection.
d. Based on regression.
e. Based on local reports.
f. Based on regional averages and population data for ages 15 years and older.

Volunteering by country, 2016 (or closest year available)* (continued)

Country or territory	Population ages 15 or older	Formal volunteering (full-time equivalent)			Informal volunteering (full-time equivalent)			Total volunteering (full-time equivalent)			Source**	
		Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Formal	Informal
Latvia	1,655,000	14,253	6,734	7,519	62,924	28,173	34,751	77,177	34,907	42,270	e	f
Lithuania	2,483,000	3,093	1,461	1,632	128,735	63,477	65,258	131,828	64,938	66,890	d	a
Luxembourg	460,000	18,070	9,675	8,394	10,827	4,378	6,449	28,896	14,053	14,843	d	a
Malta	361,000	8,396	4,495	3,900	8,497	3,436	5,061	16,892	7,931	8,961	a	a
Mexico	88,409,000	651,895	350,630	301,265	3,922,324	948,677	2,973,647	4,574,218	1,299,307	3,274,912	e	e
Moldova, Republic of	2,987,000	3,965	1,382	2,582	120,424	60,576	59,847	124,388	61,959	62,429	b	f
Mongolia	2,023,000	12,639	4,868	7,772	26,971	17,948	9,023	39,610	22,815	16,795	f	a
Morocco	24,965,000	54,539	19,427	35,112	704,702	315,771	388,930	759,241	335,198	424,042	c	f
Mozambique	12,590,105	2,238	1,245	993	312,850	136,661	176,188	315,088	137,907	177,181	a	a
Netherlands	13,874,000	488,632	226,053	262,579	326,540	132,042	194,499	815,172	358,094	457,078	c	f
New Zealand	3,626,000	133,799	51,688	82,111	100,264	38,733	61,531	234,063	90,421	143,642	b	f
Norway	4,247,000	138,769	79,018	59,751	102,756	52,286	50,471	241,525	131,304	110,221	f	a
Pakistan	111,515,000	266,377	154,785	111,592	173,599	55,420	118,179	439,976	210,205	229,771	b	f
Palestine, State of	2,836,000	25,736	9,167	16,569	137,234	54,747	82,488	162,970	63,914	99,056	e	f
Panama	2,833,000	61,314	21,642	39,672	67,653	17,282	50,371	128,967	38,924	90,043	f	a
Peru	23,450,000	215,101	123,125	91,975	529,306	146,376	382,930	744,406	269,501	474,905	a	f
Philippines	64,936,000	337,694	217,907	119,787	411,100	182,308	228,793	748,794	400,214	348,580	b	f
Poland	30,962,000	215,710	103,297	112,413	1,241,790	642,486	599,304	1,457,500	745,782	711,718	e	f
Portugal	8,866,000	109,904	33,540	76,364	99,287	25,816	73,472	209,191	59,355	149,836	f	a
Romania	16,793,000	49,417	23,347	26,070	545,387	268,243	277,145	594,804	291,590	303,215	a	a
Serbia	6,060,000	24,022	11,349	12,673	198,987	111,726	87,262	223,009	123,075	99,934	b	f
Slovakia	4,591,000	7,637	3,608	4,029	149,102	73,334	75,768	156,739	76,942	79,797	e	f
Slovenia	1,758,000	11,996	5,668	6,329	42,476	27,026	15,450	54,472	32,693	21,779	e	e
South Africa	38,981,000	120,176	57,756	62,419	211,191	47,150	164,041	331,366	104,906	226,460	b	f
Spain	38,965,000	240,704	105,817	134,887	1,148,733	412,808	735,925	1,389,437	518,626	870,812	a	a
Sweden	7,257,000	269,849	155,963	113,886	175,584	83,798	91,786	445,432	239,761	205,672	a	f
Switzerland	6,995,000	107,033	57,310	49,723	164,635	66,573	98,063	271,668	123,883	147,785	e	a
Thailand	55,238,000	103,847	70,508	33,339	738,505	388,665	349,840	842,353	459,173	383,179	f	a
Tunisia	8,491,000	146,743	52,270	94,473	239,680	107,399	132,282	386,424	159,669	226,754	e	a
Turkey	57,870,000	47,378	16,876	30,502	1,633,531	731,972	901,558	1,680,909	748,848	932,060	e	a
Uganda	17,101,419	137,097	76,277	60,820	424,951	185,630	239,321	562,048	261,907	300,141	b	f
United Kingdom	52,499,000	1,123,091	480,942	642,149	1,510,364	662,004	848,360	2,633,455	1,142,946	1,490,509	a	a
United States of America	250,801,000	6,241,525	2,692,445	3,549,080	7,801,906	2,101,571	5,700,335	14,043,431	4,794,016	9,249,415	e	f
Uruguay	2,744,000	49,298	21,509	27,788	113,903	31,765	82,138	163,201	53,274	109,927	b	a

ANNEX 3 Countries that have introduced policies, legislation or other measures on volunteering

This annex lists countries that have introduced policies, legislation or other measures specific or relevant to volunteering.

The data is based on a survey of secondary sources conducted by a consultant in September 2017 through UNV field units and regional offices. This information was then supplemented with inputs from Member States gathered for the UN Secretary-General's reports on volunteering covering the period 2008–2018.[i]

This data builds on analysis of volunteering policies and legislation presented by UNV in 2009 (UNV, 2009). Updates or information on additional policies and legislation can be sent to unv.swvr@unv.org

A: Countries found to have introduced policies, legislation or other measures specific or relevant to volunteering **before 2008** (23 countries)[i]:

- **Africa:** Burkina Faso, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania.
- **Asia and the Pacific:** Indonesia, Philippines, South Korea.
- **Europe and Central Asia:** Belgium, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Kosovo[ii], Macedonia, Portugal, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovakia, Switzerland.
- **Latin America and the Caribbean:** Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Nicaragua, Uruguay, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

B: Countries found to have introduced or updated policies, legislation or other measures specific or relevant to volunteering **since 2008** (68 countries):

- **Africa:** Benin, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Côte D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Togo, Zambia.
- **Arab States:** Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia.
- **Asia and the Pacific:** Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Japan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam.
- **Europe and Central Asia:** Azerbaijan, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, France, Germany, Georgia, Croatia, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Sweden, Spain, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.
- **Latin America and the Caribbean:** Argentina, Bolivia, Plurinational State of, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama.
- **North America:** Canada, United States of America

C: Countries reported to be **drafting** policies, legislation or other measures specific or relevant to volunteering at the time of compiling this review (4 countries):

- Angola, Liberia, Paraguay and United Arab Emirates.

i. Where countries have subsequently supplemented, updated or revised policies they are not listed in this category but are listed under B or C.
ii. All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

ANNEX 4

Field research methodology

The qualitative field research that informed this report followed an ethnographic and comparative case study design which allowed the research team to assess how volunteerism challenges or contributes to the adaptive strategies practised by resilient communities.

The research had two objectives:

- identify the distinctive characteristics of volunteerism that help or hinder the target community's capacity to cope and adapt during adverse events; and
- identify policies and norms that have supported or discouraged volunteerism for community resilience.

PREPARATIONS

Research team

The research team was led by a senior writer/researcher who was responsible, in partnership with the project coordination team, for research design, data analysis and report writing. The senior writer/researcher also supervised the technical research team, which consisted of four regional research mentors who provided support and quality assurance to the volunteer field researchers (figure A4.1).

The field research teams comprised international and national volunteers who conducted research activities in communities in 15 countries, including designing community research plans, arranging and conducting data collection, coding, analysis, validation and country reporting. Local volunteers and partner agencies provided logistical and other support for the field teams.

To standardize the research process, the technical research team produced a 60-page field manual, *Community-Based Analysis of Volunteer Impacts on Community Resilience*, which was provided to each of the field research teams during an initial four-day training. The technical and field research teams were supported by an administrative team based at UNV headquarters along with UNV technical staff, UNV field units and partner agencies.

Figure **A4.1** **Composition of the technical and field research teams**

SENIOR WRITER/RESEARCHER

RESEARCH MENTOR	RESEARCH MENTOR	RESEARCH MENTOR	RESEARCH MENTOR
Burundi	Russian Federation	Sudan	China
Guatemala	Egypt	Malawi	Myanmar
Bolivia, Plurinational state of	Netherlands	Tanzania, United Republic of	Sri Lanka
Madagascar	Greece		Philippines

Selection of communities

The participating communities were selected through an open call for concept notes from interested partner organizations in September–November 2017. Partner organizations were encouraged to submit suggestions for field research communities based on the following specific criteria:

- *Resilience, adaptability and self-sufficiency.* Communities where volunteers are adapting to environmental, social and economic change and demonstrating improved capacity for local self-sufficiency.
- *Impact.* Communities where volunteer engagement has led or can lead to improved community well-being, social cohesion, peace or increased participation.
- *Community empowerment.* Communities where volunteer initiatives are demonstrating local community leadership and empowerment of local people.
- *Partnerships.* Communities where volunteer initiatives are forging effective partnerships with governments, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders.
- *Innovation and transferability.* Communities where volunteer initiatives are demonstrating new approaches that will offer best practices of potential relevance to other communities.
- *Empowerment of women and social inclusion.* Communities where volunteer initiatives promote the equality and empowerment of women and marginalized groups.
- *Ownership.* Communities where a diverse group of volunteers – international, national and local – are working together.

In addition to these criteria, the selection of communities prioritized a regional and thematic balance, diversity of volunteering models and clear added value of different levels of engagement (community, local authorities, national policy and so on).

A total of 15 geographic areas were selected based on the concept notes submitted. Up to that point, the areas were determined largely by external actors (partners). Once on the ground, field researchers worked with stakeholders to identify communities of interest within each area, particularly those where individuals and groups were experiencing shocks and stresses. The working assumption was that any community would have examples of volunteerism that could be studied and thus could be selected by the volunteer researchers. As such, some researchers ultimately selected communities where UNV and research partners were not working. The limitations of the community selection are discussed below.

Conceptual framework

The working conceptual framework aimed to understand how a distinctive, person-centred volunteerism approach could affect the adaptive structures and processes of communities (either positively or negatively) beyond other resilience approaches. The research aimed to investigate whether, in addition to humanitarian efforts, the distinctive characteristics of volunteering could demonstrate the value and challenges of local participation, assuming that resilience is not truly possible or sustainable without local engagement and participation. It also examined the complementary value and challenges of external actors supporting local participation. The initial conceptual framework was considered a work in progress; the final conceptual framework was refined through discussions with experts and the research teams and upon considering results from practical participatory assessments on the ground.

Interview and focus group guidelines

Most interviews and focus groups were conducted in line with a semi-formal interview guide. The first part of the guide asked participants to identify the distinctive characteristics of volunteerism that help or hinder their adaptive capacities. The second part asked participants to identify the impact of different groups of volunteers on the policies and norms that affect their ability to prepare and plan for, absorb, recover from and adapt to adverse events.

After participants identified distinctive characteristic of volunteerism, the field researchers asked for specific examples of how these characteristics had manifested in preparation for, during or after adverse events. The field researchers then prompted participants to consider different forms of volunteerism and different groups of volunteers in terms of socio-demographic characteristics.

The final section of the interview guide sought to uncover the ways in which a particular area's policies and social norms support or discourage volunteerism to help the community adapt to adverse events – again disaggregated by different types of volunteers and groups.

RESEARCH ETHICS

UNV developed a research ethics procedure based on guidance and advice from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Office of Research – Innocenti. It was evaluated by an internal review board comprising SWVR Expert Advisory Group members and UNV's evaluation specialist. The approach was deemed low risk as it involved collecting

data on community-level activities and trends rather than individual or household data. Several restrictions were placed on engagement with participants in line with this approach:

> *The research will only cover questions regarding trends, issues and responses at the community level. It will not look at household or individual-level data. The research will not involve minors (as per local definitions) nor persons with mental health issues or learning difficulties for whom an additional duty of care should be afforded. The research will not directly cover traumatic events of violence or abuse which may be harmful for participants. Research activities will not specifically target vulnerable sub-groups (e.g. victims of domestic violence) where identifying and participating as such could bring further harms to individuals.*
>
> UNV internal guidance, "Research Ethics Procedure" (2017), p. 8

A simplified guidance note was circulated to research volunteers outlining the principles of ethical research, research ethics procedures (including training and induction), research planning and implementation, and reporting of ethics concerns. Training was given on consent, confidentiality and anonymity during the in-person training to field researchers. Subsequently, all field researchers and the local volunteers who supported them were required to complete UNICEF's online "Ethics in Evidence Generation" course and to email their completion certificates to UNV prior to completing the research plan. Field researchers were then required to use this information to carry out and submit a harms and benefits analysis and mitigation plan as part of their work. Any issues were to be reported to UNV either directly or via the research mentors, with the requirement that they be dealt with in real time and noted in the community research reports.

DATA COLLECTION

Before collecting the data, the field researchers obtained informed consent and agreed on a common understanding of key terms. The field research teams, in some cases in collaboration with partner organizations, were responsible for identifying key individuals who were knowledgeable about vulnerabilities and resilience in the communities. Ideally, at least two separate key informant interviews were completed in each field survey location. The format of these interviews was more flexible than the semi-formal interview process used for the focus group discussions, thereby providing space for interviewers to probe and explore more deeply. Focus group discussion participants were identified through a snowball approach, with field researchers following up on ideas and issues arising from previous conversations.

The field researchers conducted all interviews and focus groups together, and local teams regrouped each day to share and reflect on their experiences and challenges. At the end of the day, all statements were entered into a standardized recording file and were reviewed together to support continuous improvement and consistency in information quality. Field researchers were given ideas of how to draw out different perspectives from groups of participants, including those traditionally least heard in decision-making processes, understanding that these ideas could be adapted to the context. For example, a combination of focus group discussions selected or self-selected by age and gender were carried out.

A number of measures were put in place to ensure data quality, including standardized instructions for data collection, ongoing checks by the research mentors, use of a real-time cloud platform for sharing data and codes between field researchers and mentors, daily debriefings among the research teams and regional weekly meetings among researchers. All field researchers and mentors also met for a three-day workshop within their region midway through their fieldwork to share and discuss methods and initial findings and to ensure that all researchers maintained a consistent approach to data collection.

DATA ANALYSIS

Primary analysis of the data in each community was completed using an iteratively standardized coding scheme prepared by the technical research team during regular consultations with the field research teams.

Coding scheme

The development of the coding scheme followed a participatory household economy approach. Although the technical research team provided the field researchers with a standardized coding scheme for cross-comparison (coding down), the scheme and the research process were flexible enough to allow for the emergence of codes from the local contexts (coding up). In this way, communities and local informants were involved in developing codes and additional methods.

The initial coding scheme was based on a thorough literature review (Lough, 2017), and the theory and conceptual framework established a basic hierarchy in the standardized codes. Qualitative analysis was ongoing, even as data were being collected. Field researchers coded one description of a discrete activity or outcome per row in their recording file spreadsheets, copying in the text associated with each code. Each statement was coded to three questions to facilitate easier data interpretation and disaggregation. When a statement warranted more than one code, the field researchers copied that statement into a separate row on the recording file and assigned it an additional code.

Each statement also received a disaggregation code to describe the type of volunteerism, the relevant gender and age group (if applicable) and so on. If no disaggregation code was needed, the field researchers left that cell blank. If no available code in the standardized coding scheme adequately represented the idea underlying the statement, the field researchers developed an additional code, which was then added to the standardized coding scheme following consultation with the technical research team. The technical research team added 12 codes to the initial coding scheme based on consultations with the field research teams during data collection.

Extrapolation of coding frequencies

Once all the data had been collected, the codes were sorted and mapped to charts and tables so that the findings could be presented in community report cards and research reports. This process included disaggregation by categories such as gender, type of stress or shock experienced and volunteerism type, and it was completed after the data were sorted to see whether any strong trends or differences emerged. Findings were discussed at validation workshops and other standalone validation events in the communities to assist in understanding the reasons behind the priorities and scores that emerged.

INTERPRETING THE FINDINGS

The field researchers interpreted the data iteratively and categorized and coded the data to inductively develop a thematic analysis. Once they had coded and sorted all the data, they began organizing the data into similar categories, such as supportive policies and norms, restraining policies and norms, distinctive attributes, volunteer activities, volunteer outcomes and implications for suggested improvements. After deciding on the main thematic categories, the field researchers compared the results with what they had expected (that is, with the original research objectives, questions and conceptual framework). They then summarized their main findings in a community report, which included a set of standard reporting sections. This process yielded 15 final community reports that outlined the key themes and findings from the field research.

Validating the findings

After preparing a draft report of their findings, the field researchers asked community members, programme staff and others with knowledge of the research context to critically review the initial analysis, recommendations, learnings and conclusions. The field research team organized validation workshops and standalone validation events with local communities and stakeholders, which involved convening a meeting or series of meetings in the research area. Ideally, participants included community representatives from each of the survey locations, field research team members and representatives from local organizations – although this was not the case with every community. In some cases a separate meeting was held for community members who were less literate and for whom results had to be presented differently. In some field research communities, the researchers produced a written report card summarizing the results. However, a written summary was not shared in all communities, and validation in several communities was largely verbal. Based on feedback from the validation process, the field researchers revised the community reports and submitted them to the senior writer/researcher.

Integrating the findings

The senior writer/researcher took a number of steps to integrate the findings from all 15 communities into a draft report. First, the senior writer/researcher and research mentors met weekly to discuss the newly emerging and ongoing findings from each of the 15 communities. Detailed notes from these meetings, combined with emerging field data, informed the initial findings and messaging of the draft report. The senior writer/researcher also participated in a regional meeting to discuss emerging findings with the research mentors and field researchers. Following the completion of the field research, the senior writer/researcher and the UNV team received a copy of all community reports and coded field data. These reports and data informed the bulk of the summative analysis that led to the final analyses.

The senior writer/researcher collated all of the individual codes from the community reports and the field data. These data were used to populate three heatmap tables representing the key shocks and stresses, the volunteer distinctiveness codes and the primary policies and norms influencing voluntary action (annex 7). With the community reports following a generally standardized format, the senior writer/researcher also collated conclusions from the individual communities section by section to inform the summative analysis on each topic. The quotations included in the final report are taken from the community reports, from the coded datasheets or directly from translated transcripts.

LIMITATIONS

Study design

The most frequently cited constraint on the research for this report was limited time. This was often due to unexpected delays in deployment and travel combined with important holiday periods such as Ramadan. These delays resulted in the field researchers having less time to spend in the communities prior to and during the research period, which meant that many of the field researchers conducted fewer interviews and focus groups than they had originally planned.

Because not all of the information gathered was based on a large sample size, in some communities it was difficult to draw general conclusions. Likewise, analysis from communities cannot be considered to be representative of the entire country.

Furthermore, the communities that were selected skewed the data towards evidence from Africa and Asia, leaving communities in Europe, the Arab States and Latin America and the Caribbean less represented and communities in North America and Australia omitted altogether. Financial limitations also skewed the research sample towards those participants who lived near the central setting of a country, resulting in less representation from those in isolated areas.

Finally, reliance on volunteers and volunteer-involving organizations as a source of data about volunteer activities and their impacts on communities may have biased the findings towards a more positive portrayal of volunteerism's contribution to enhancing community resilience. However, because the site of research was not always the same as the site of intervention by partners and because communities largely talked about the significance of their own efforts, this bias may have been less than anticipated.

Data collection

Time was also cited as a key limitation in data collection. Long travel times, bad weather and other events during the fieldwork affected the research. For instance, two earthquakes occurred in Guatemala, heavy rainfall created logistical challenges in Tanzania and snowfall in the Russian Federation affected the scheduling of focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

In several cases the researchers noted difficulty conveying the purpose of the study to participants. For instance, in Sudan field researchers overheard that participants had been asked by community leaders to exaggerate their stories in some focus group discussions in order to "receive more aid". People's uncertainty about the research objectives also affected their trust in the researchers. For example, field researchers in Egypt sometimes found it difficult to make it clear to participants that the focus group discussions were not evaluations of volunteering programmes, while in the Philippines participants in focus group discussions were worried about attending because of ongoing security threats.

Security, privacy and confidentiality concerns in some communities may have contributed to bias. Some cohorts – particularly women and young people – were less able or less expected to speak in group exercises. This was counteracted in some communities by arranging women-only and youth-only focus group discussions. In the Russian Federation, the lack of participation by people with disabilities was also noted. In Sudan, the questionnaires had to be pre-approved by the government's Humanitarian Aid Commission.

Finally, language and translation were major constraints in many regions. Language barriers required the scheduling of meetings around the availability of translators, limiting the timing of the field research. Furthermore, the requirement to translate findings meant that despite researchers' efforts to achieve clarification or validation of translated responses, the meaning of the intended information may have been misconstrued in its interpretation. For instance, in Burundi, where the language is reportedly very rich, field researchers believed that some nuances were not fully captured.

Data analysis

Despite the orientation, midpoint regional training meetings and regular ongoing training sessions, some field researchers found it challenging to code and interpret the data. Some field researchers had had limited exposure to qualitative research, and, apart from the practice training sessions, this was their first time coding data. This was more evident in some communities than others. Although all coding results were reviewed by the research mentors to ensure high quality, the process was far more time consuming and challenging in some communities.

For one community report, the field researchers did not write up the summaries of the focus group discussions and key informant interviews until several weeks after the events. This led to complications with analysis and interpretation and raised questions about data validity and reliability. Although evident negligence of the research protocol or process was rare, this example is indicative of other potentially hidden challenges that are likely when aggregating results second-hand across a range of contexts.

ANNEX 5

Key informant interviews and focus group discussions

Some 110 focus group discussions were conducted across the 15 field research communities (table A5.1). On average, focus groups consisted of nine people, and 57 per cent of participants were female. Some 174 key informant interviews were also conducted, and 44 per cent of participants were female. Roughly 21 informal interviews also informed the findings, though not all informal interviews were tracked. All participants were aged 18 or older.

Table A5.1 **Summary of focus group discussions and key informant interviews**

	Focus group discussions				Key informant interviews			
Country	Number	Average size	Men	Women	Men	Women	Informal interviews	Total participants
Bolivia, Plurinational State of	6	7.2	17	26	3	4	na	56
Burundi	9	10.0	39	51	12	3	8	109
China	6	6.3	11	27	12	14	4	64
Egypt	6	13.5	21	60	4	3	na	81
Greece	5	5.4	11	16	2	5	na	34
Guatemala	8	7.3	34	24	11	8	na	77
Madagascar	8	7.8	26	36	9	2	0	78
Malawi	10	16.1	117	44	6	4	7	171
Myanmar	12	8.3	50	49	8	5	na	112
Netherlands	1	7.0	0	7	1	4	na	12
Philippines	8	10.8	28	58	8	9	0	103
Russian Federation	5	7.2	18	18	4	3	na	43
Sri Lanka	9	10.7	14	82	10	7	na	113
Sudan	7	7.6	29	24	2	2	0	59
Tanzania, United Republic of	10	7.4	22	52	5	4	2	83
Total	110	8.8	437	574	97	77	na	1,195

na not applicable
a. Informal interviews were not tracked in each community.
b. Total may not equal the sum of values in preceding columns because some individuals may have participated more than once.

Field research communities

ANNEX 6

Table A6.1 Field research communities, by country

1	**Bolivia, Plurinational State of**	Puerto Yumani is an indigenous community of the Tacana culture in the municipality of Rurrenabaque. The main economic activity is agriculture. The area is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, particularly flooding. Other issues facing the community include lack of clean drinking water, poor access to health care, land ownership disputes and natural resource extraction.
2	**Burundi**	Yaranda is one of the 29 districts of Kirundo Province in north-eastern Burundi. It is an ethnically diverse rural community with a population of 7,590. The area has only basic infrastructure and services, with low levels of education. Most of the population is engaged in farming. Yaranda is prone to natural disasters, particularly drought. Food shortages and sometimes famine are a major stress on the population. Yaranda has experienced substantial out-migration as community members have fled to Rwanda and Tanzania.
3	**China**	Xinzhuang is a peri-urban village in Changping District on the outskirts of Beijing. It has around 2,000 residents. The main economic activity is agriculture. Xinzhuang lacks adequate public services for waste and sanitation, and garbage disposal has a major negative impact on health and the environment. Xiaguangli is located in Chaoyang District in central Beijing and has around 8,000 residents. It was once the residential area for families of employees of a state-owned factory, and many residents are elderly people who used to work in the factory. Major problems facing the community include low-quality housing and infrastructure.
4	**Egypt**	Zeinhom is a low-income neighbourhood in the Al-Sayida Zeinab district of Cairo. It has a population of approximately 20,000. Much of the research in Zeinhom focused on the Qal'et el Kabsh community, which faces many socio-economic and environmental challenges related to low levels of education and limited access to basic social services along with poor infrastructure and overcrowding.
5	**Greece**	The 6th City District Council area, one of the two poorest districts of Athens, has a large number of refugees and migrants, many of whom have arrived since 2014 and face many challenges, including access to basic social services. It also suffers from high unemployment, particularly among young people and migrants.
6	**Guatemala**	Caserío El Edén in the municipality of Comitancillo, department of San Marcos, has a poverty rate of 90.7 per cent and an extreme poverty rate of 44.1 per cent. It is a Mam indigenous community of the Maya ethnic group and has a population of 656. More than half the population is aged under 18, and the main economic activity is agriculture. The community sits at an altitude of 2,300–3,300 metres above sea level and is highly vulnerable to natural disasters. Access to the community is difficult, with roads impassable during the rainy season.
7	**Madagascar**	The community of Milenaka is in the district of Toliara II, region of Atsimo-Andrefana, in south-western Madagascar. It is an inland rural community comprising 14 fokontany (villages) that are often 2–3 kilometres from a paved road. The population is around 23,000, most of whom are from the Masikoro ethnic group and 38 per cent of whom are aged under 18. The main economic activity is agriculture. Key stresses facing the local population include unstable employment, poor access to clean water and security issues (often cattle theft).
8	**Malawi**	Dzaleka refugee camp is located in Dowa district in central Malawi, about 47 kilometres north of Lilongwe. It was established in 1994 and is home to more than 30,000 refugees and asylum seekers – half of them children – from nine countries (mostly the Great Lakes Region – namely, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda). Population density is about 6,000 people per square kilometre. The community faces many challenges, including poverty, unemployment, inadequate access to education, food insufficiency, poor shelter and housing, gender-based violence, and crime.

ANNEX 6

Field research communities (continued)

Table A6.1 **Field research communities, by country**

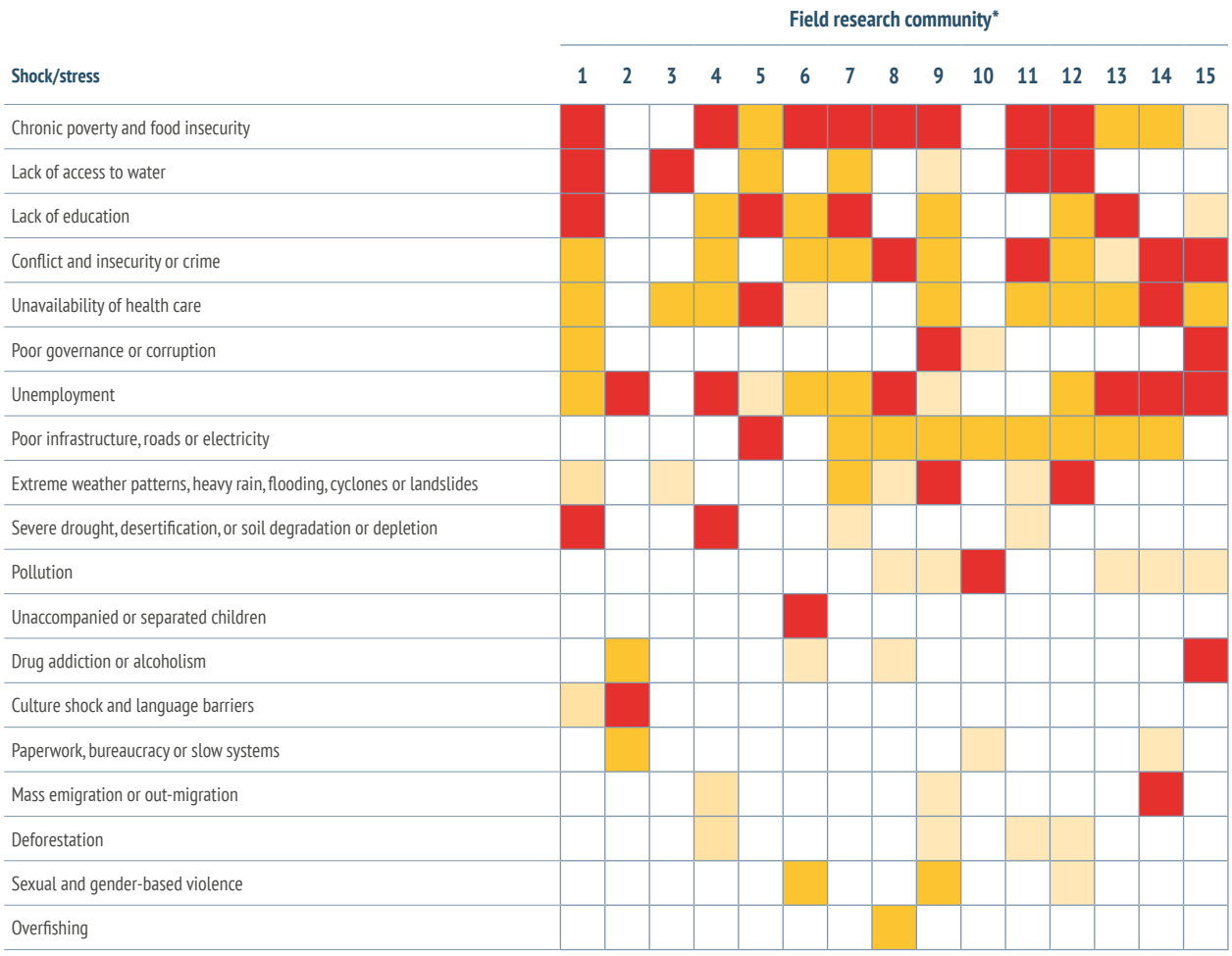
9	**Myanmar**	Kyaikhto Township is one of 10 townships in Mon State, which is located along the south-east coast of Myanmar and has an ethnically diverse population that has been subject to inter-ethnic conflict. In Kyaikhto Township agriculture is the main economic activity, although natural resource extraction has increased in recent years. The township has high unemployment and limited access to basic social services, poorly developed infrastructure and high vulnerability to natural disasters, particularly flooding. Women face substantial challenges to engaging in civic activity, and gender discrimination and gender-based violence are widespread problems.
10	**Netherlands**	Moerwijk is a neighbourhood of The Hague, a city on the western coast of the Netherlands. It has a high foreign-born population (49 per cent) as well as many elderly residents. Since 2014 Moerwijk has seen an increase in immigrants, many of them from Eritrea and Syria. Moerwijk faces high unemployment and poverty as well as tensions within the community caused by cultural differences.
11	**Philippines**	Panguil Bay and Illana Bay are two rural regions in the Lanao del Norte area of Mindanao. Lanao del Norte suffers from substantial environmental stresses, including overfishing and mangrove deforestation, which affect fishing, the main economic activity. Communities in the region are also highly vulnerable to flooding. Another major stress is the ongoing conflict across Mindanao.
12	**Russian Federation**	Zakamie is part of the Russian Federation's Republic of Tatarstan and consists of small towns and rural areas. It has an overall population of 300,000, with people of Chuvash, Russian and Tatar ethnicity. Key stresses facing the region's population include unemployment and outward migration (with many young people migrating to Kazan or Moscow in search of jobs), economic inequality, drug addiction and organized crime.
13	**Sri Lanka**	Ketawaththa is a community of six villages with a population of 1,062 in the Meegahakiula Division in Uva Province. Meegahakiula is one of the poorer divisions in Sri Lanka, and Ketawaththa is one of the very poor communities in Sri Lanka. The main economic activity is agriculture, although women are employed in agriculture only during the rainy season. Poverty, caused by a lack of stable income sources, drought and low education levels, is a huge stress factor facing the community.
14	**Sudan**	Dagag is a village 15 kilometres from El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur State. Dagag has a population of 2,800, and most community members maintain their livelihoods through farming. The average individual income is very low, around $2 a day. There is no electricity or running water in Dagag. Research was also conducted in Gedail Wagief, the closest village to Dagag that is near a freshwater source, after it became clear that access to water was one of the most urgent concerns in Dagag.
15	**Tanzania, United Republic of**	Msimbu ward consists of seven villages in Kisarawe District in the Pwani Region and is about 45 kilometres from Dar es Salaam. Most Msimbu villagers make their living from agriculture and poultry raising. The community's greatest stresses are lack of access to health care and education.

Heatmaps

ANNEX 7

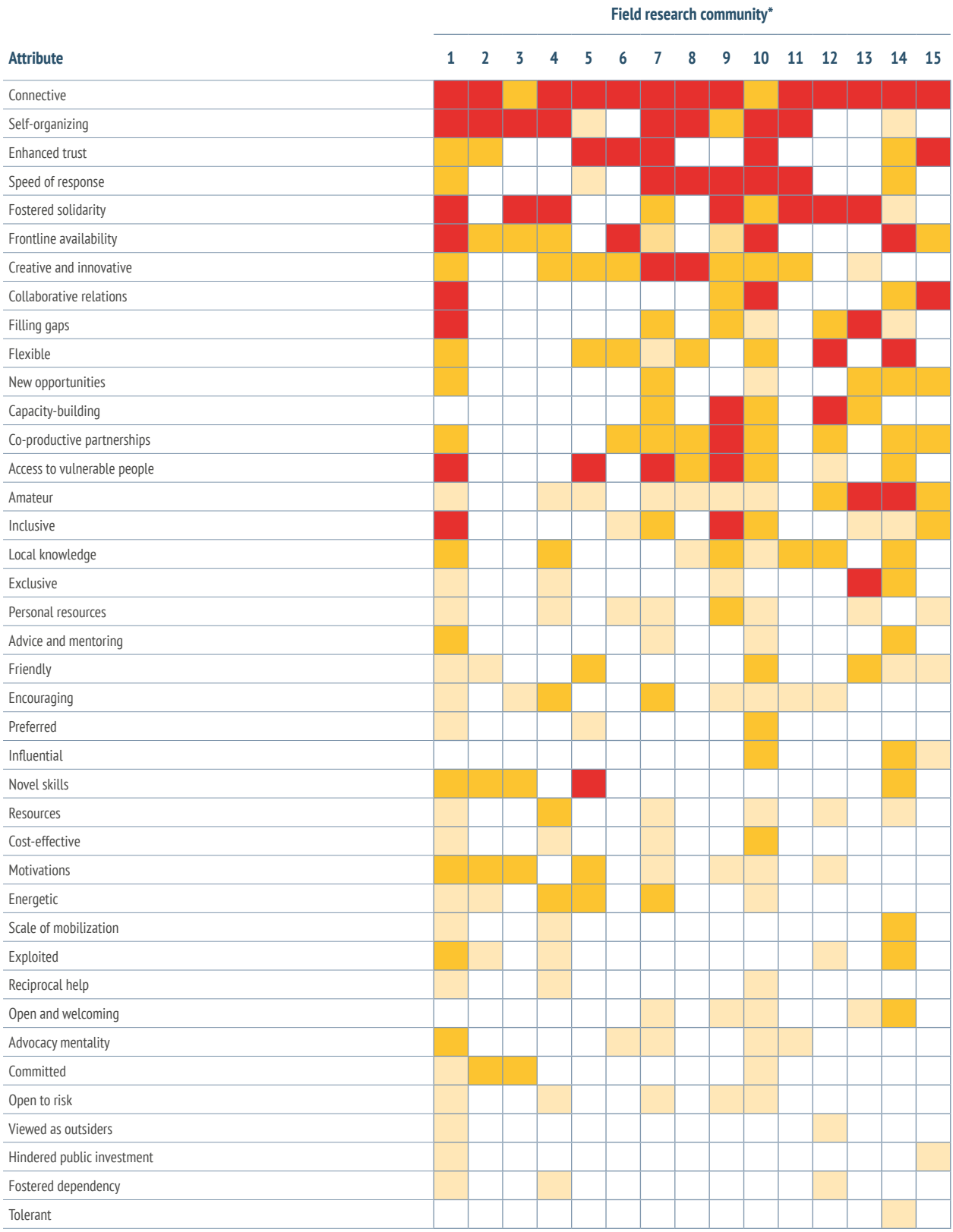
Tables A7.1 and A7.2 are heatmaps showing the codes identified across the 15 communities for: shocks/stresses; distinctive attributes of volunteerism; and policies and norms influencing voluntary action. The codes are arranged in descending order of frequency, with those most mentioned (in red) at the top and those least mentioned (in yellow) or not mentioned (clear) towards the bottom.

Table A7.1 Heatmap of key shocks/stresses identified in the 15 field research communities



* Legend: **1** Sudan **2** Netherlands **3** Bolivia **4** Burundi **5** Tanzania **6** Malawi **7** Sri Lanka **8** Philippines **9** Myanmar **10** China **11** Guatemala **12** Madagascar **13** Egypt **14** Greece **15** Russia

Table **A7.2** **Heatmap of distinctive attributes of volunteerism identified in the 15 field research communities**

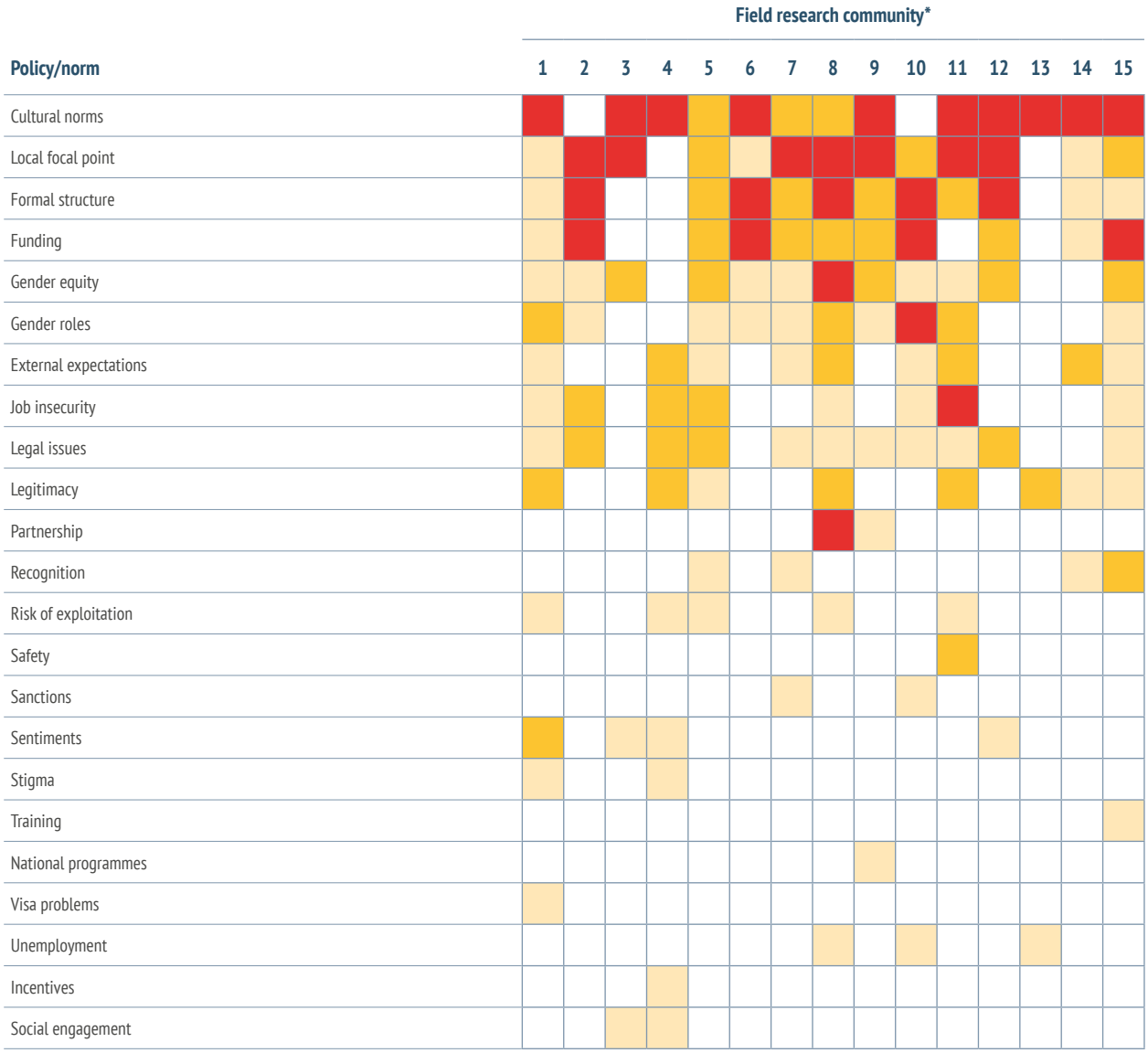


* Legend: **1** Sudan **2** Netherlands **3** Bolivia **4** Burundi **5** Tanzania **6** Malawi **7** Sri Lanka **8** Philippines **9** Myanmar **10** China **11** Guatemala **12** Madagascar **13** Egypt **14** Greece **15** Russia

ANNEX 7

Heatmaps (continued)

Table **A7.3** **Heatmap of primary influencing policies and norms identified in the 15 research communities**



* Legend: **1** Sudan **2** Netherlands **3** Bolivia **4** Burundi **5** Tanzania **6** Malawi **7** Sri Lanka **8** Philippines **9** Myanmar **10** China **11** Guatemala **12** Madagascar **13** Egypt **14** Greece **15** Russia

ANNEX 8

Figures, tables and boxes

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ANNEX 9

Acronyms

LIST OF ACRONYMS

2030 Agenda	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
ICLS	International Conference of Labour Statisticians
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ILO	International Labour Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
SWVR	State of the World's Volunteerism Report
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNV	United Nations Volunteers programme

NOTES

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2. WEF 2017.
3. UNISDR 2015.
4. Institute for Economics and Peace 2017.
5. Gates and others 2016.
6. UNISDR 2015.
7. WEF 2018.
8. UNDP 2015a.
9. IFRC 2014.
10. Quinlan and others 2015.
11. Joseph 2002.
12. Schipper and Langston 2015.
13. Simonsen and others 2014.
14. De Coning 2016.
15. Oxley 2013.
16. De Weijer 2013.
17. UNV 2011.
18. Hazeldine and Baillie Smith 2015.
19. UNV 2016.
20. DuBois and others 2015.
21. WHO 2017.
22. ODI 2015.
23. Graham 2017.
24. Fernandez, Barbera and van Dorp 2006.
25. Burns and Howard 2015.
26. Seelig and Lough 2015.
27. Hazeldine and Baillie Smith 2015.
28. Burns and others 2015.
29. Church and others 2018, Loos and others 2015, UNV 2017a.
30. Norris and others 2008.
31. UNV 2014.
32. UNGA 2015a.
33. Lee 2015.
34. UNV 2015a.
35. Hazeldine and Baillie Smith 2015.
36. Whittaker and others 2015.
37. Helsloot and Ruitenberg 2004.
38. Mohan and Stokke 2000.
39. Fernandez, Barbera and van Dorp 2006.
40. Sauer and others 2014.
41. Sherraden and others 2008.
42. Helsloot and Ruitenberg 2004.
43. Arnold and de Cosmo 2015.
44. Oxley 2013.
45. Arnold and de Cosmo 2015.
46. Arnold and de Cosmo 2015.
47. Enarson and Chakrabarti 2009.
48. Arnold and de Cosmo 2015.
49. Enarson and Chakrabarti 2009.
50. UNGA 2014.
51. UNV 2018a.
52. Salamon and Sokolowski 2001.
53. Petriwskyj and Warburton 2007.
54. UNV 2011.
55. UNGA 2002.
56. Wilson and Janoski 1995.
57. Cordingley 2000.
58. UNV 2011.
59. Salamon, Sokolowski and Haddock 2011.
60. UNV 2018a.
61. ILO 2013.
62. UNV 2018a.
63. UNV 2018a.
64. Based on more precise data than previous global estimates and covering a far larger share of the world's population (72 per cent), these updated estimates are lower than estimates in the 2011 SWVR, which estimated volunteering at 140 million full-time equivalent workers.
65. UNV 2018a.
66. OECD 2015.
67. Salamon and others 2017.
68. Salamon and others 2017.
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72. Morrow-Howell and others 2015.
73. Gonzales, Matz-Costa and Morrow-Howell 2015.
74. African Union Commission 2017
75. Ministry of Education and Science of Russian Federation Association of Volunteer Centers 2016.
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78. OCHA 2013.
79. Meier 2013.
80. ITU 2017.
81. UNV 2017b.
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83. UNDP 2015b.
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90. Scolobig and others 2015.
91. Bennett, Foley and Pantuliano 2016.
92. Maly 2014.
93. De Weijer 2013.
94. UNV 2011.
95. UNV 2015a.
96. UNV 2011.
97. Brown 1999.
98. UNV 2017b.
99. Butcher and Igartúa 2016.
100. Lee and Brudney 2012.
101. Serna 2010.
102. Jastrzab and others 2006, Wilson 2000, Lee and Brudney 2012, Serna 2010.
103. Lee and Brudney 2012.
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105. Norris and others 2008.
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112. Jeannotte 2003, Collins 2009, Mollica 2017, Moran 2016.
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152. Pournik, Chung and Miller 2012.
153. Smyth and Sweetman 2015.

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155. Marcus and Harper 2014.
156. Arnold and de Cosmo 2015.
157. Alexander and Sagramola 2014.
158. Battle 2015.
159. Masten 2014.
160. Arnold and de Cosmo 2015.
161. Whittaker and others 2015.
162. Whittaker and others 2015.
163. Whittaker and others 2015.
164. Sauer and others 2014.
165. Sauer and others 2014.
166. Hazeldine and Baillie Smith 2015.
167. Thormar and others 2010.
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172. UNGA 2016.
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181. Shatkin 2016
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183. Allen 2006.
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VOLUNTEERISM

IS THE THREAD THAT BINDS COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

The 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report *The thread that binds* is a United Nations flagship publication that presents new evidence on the role of volunteerism in strengthening community resilience. It finds that communities value volunteerism because it enables them to create collective strategies for dealing with diverse economic, social and environmental challenges. At the same time, unless appropriately supported by wider actors, volunteering can be exclusive and burdensome for some groups. Alone, communities have limited capacities and resources to adapt to emerging and future risks. The report thus explores how governments and development actors can best engage with volunteerism to nurture its most beneficial characteristics, while mitigating against potential harms to the most vulnerable. In doing so, the report provides an important contribution to the evidence base on inclusive, citizen-led approaches to resilience-building.

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