



Volunteerism and Community Resilience: Locally Owned Solutions Delivering Impact

VOLUNTEERING TOGETHER TO ENABLE CHANGE
AND CREATE A BETTER WORLD CONTEXT PAPER

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Volunteering Together to Enable Change and Create a Better World.

The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasised how volunteers as agents of change provide the practical action that builds hope and resilience, improves lives and strengthens communities. The pandemic has resulted in the postponement of the October 2020 IAVE World Volunteer Conference hosted by the Emirates Foundation in Abu Dhabi until the autumn of 2021. However, the conference theme chosen for 2020 of 'volunteering together to enable change and create a better world' has never been more relevant or more real.

As part of the preparations for the conference the Emirates Foundation had agreed to support the writing of seven context papers on the conference sub themes. This project has continued in order to provide for greater consideration of the issues, particularly with relevance to volunteering and COVID-19, and to enable wider dissemination of knowledge that will add value to those supporting and developing volunteering around the world.

The context papers seek to bring forward current thinking and any relevant research, highlighting case studies to demonstrate impact. The papers will be published and available between July and December 2020. In addition, an incredibly special series of online Forums is being organized to enable the sharing of knowledge and discussion of the issues. The papers and the Forums provide information and insight on the following key topics:

- ▶ Volunteerism and Community Resilience – Locally Owned Solutions Delivering Impact
- ▶ Future Leadership – the Role of Youth Volunteers
- ▶ Tolerance and Inclusion – Volunteering Enabling Community Cohesion and Embracing Diversity
- ▶ Volunteering and the Digital World – Extending the Power of Volunteering through New Technologies
- ▶ Corporate Volunteering – Delivering Business Objectives through a Values Focused Mission
- ▶ Measurement and Impact – Providing the Evidence that Volunteering is Good for Society and Good for You
- ▶ Volunteering 2030 – New Paradigms

Introduction

In this context paper, we explore how community-based volunteering building upon existing social structures and practices can foster both resilience to crisis and sustainable development. The connection between volunteering and community resilience is now in sharper focus than ever due to the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has highlighted how communities come together to support each other at times of crisis, through the emergence of organised and spontaneous volunteering to help people to protect themselves from the coronavirus disease and get through the tough social and economic measures put in place to contain it.

The paper will be divided in three main sections. First, we interrogate the term resilience and argue for the need for contextual understandings of the concept based on: resilience of whom, against what and for which purpose? We present key definitions of the term but put forward some cautions around its use to suggest that the transformational and relational aspects of resilience should be emphasised.

In the second section we argue that community-based volunteers take ownership of community development and disaster response through leadership embedded within local knowledge. We go on to argue that **local volunteering efforts can be amplified through supportive solidarity, a model that will be explained in section 2, in which organisations approach their role with an understanding of context, power dynamics and responsibility.** To illustrate the paper's arguments, we present examples of community-based volunteering in action through case studies of resilience emerging from within communities – through voluntary efforts expressive of positive agency and community leadership, including examples of external support and solidarity.

In the third section we present the key issues and takeaways from our interrogation of volunteerism and community resilience to support organisations and the sector with potential areas for further consideration. More research is needed to understand how community-based volunteering and resilience mechanisms interweave in different contexts – with the caution to engage with issues of power and responsibility of different actors at different levels and avoid the use of resilience as a 'label'.

Finally, we conclude that resilience is not an end state but an on-going process of change and transformation, and that volunteers are constantly shaping their communities' development in context-specific ways. Hence, community volunteering offers an opportunity to challenge power dynamics within the non-profit and development sector, moving towards communities engaging organisations and networks to provide support to initiatives that they design and lead.

Resilience of whom, against what and for which purpose?

Despite becoming embedded in society over the past few decades, the concept of resilience remains disputed across disciplines and sectors, both in theory and practice. Differing perceptions across settings – from global South to North, urban to rural – reveal the need for contextual understanding(s) of resilience for individuals and communities. The term ‘resilience’ does not have a literal translation in several languages and needs to be conceptualised beyond an individual predisposition to thrive despite hardship (Thomas et al., 2016). Wider realities and responsibilities must be taken into account. In humanitarian and development work, resilience has evolved from an explanation of responses to risk to become an increasingly normative approach whose attributes must be attained and measured through indicators and programming tools.

In this section, we build upon critical studies on resilience (Cote & Nightingale, 2012; Cretney, 2014) to suggest three key questions for unpacking this term in volunteering spaces: Resilience (i) of whom, (ii) against what and (iii) for which purpose? Whilst acknowledging there are multiple ways of speaking about resilience or understanding what it means in practice, we will discuss these key questions in relation to the following definitions by volunteer-involving organisations:

- ▶ **The ability of individuals, communities, organisations or countries** exposed to disasters, crises and underlying vulnerabilities to anticipate, prepare for, reduce the impact of, cope with and recover from the effects of shocks and stresses without compromising their long-term prospects. (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2014)
- ▶ **An inherent as well as acquired condition** achieved by managing risks over time at the individual, household, community and societal levels in ways that minimise costs, build capacity to manage and sustain development momentum, and maximise transformative potential. (United Nations Volunteers, 2018)

Resilience of whom?

First, we recognise resilience as a multi-layered concept which can be interpreted from different perspectives (i.e. **individuals, households, communities, organisations, countries, society**). At the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework, the language of Target 1.5 evolves around building “the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations” (United Nations, 2020). Dominant narratives tend to suggest the ‘vulnerable’ as the ones who need to be resilient. At individual level, it is often seen as the optimal combination of personal features and skills, such as sense of coherence, critical awareness, self-efficacy, coping strategies, life events, etc. (Eachus, 2014; Paton, 2008).

At community level, resilience turns to the assets and systems in place, such as healthcare, agri-food, education and infrastructure (Cafer, Green, & Goreham, 2019). The relationships between different levels are, however, complex and interweaving – more than a collection of individuals, communities

reflect their group interactions as well as multiple external factors. Here we look at resilience as a **relational and evolving ability or condition** that is **not only inherent but also acquired**, both at individual and community levels.

Resilience against what?

Second, resilience is often presented in policy and academic literature in relation to disaster preparedness and emergency management (see Patel, Rogers, Amlôt, & Rubin, 2017; Paton, 2008; UK Cabinet Office, 2019). The widespread focus of resilience relates to the capacity of managing risks, bouncing back from shocks and responding to disasters and crises. In the SDGs agenda, targets on resilience building are associated with reducing the exposure and vulnerability of the poor to “climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters” (United Nations, 2020). We recognise the importance of discussing resilience in face of particularly adverse events, such as the current COVID-19 pandemic.

However, this should be coupled with a **broader understanding of resilience in view of on-going threats and underlying vulnerabilities to individuals and communities**, such as poverty, lack of education and poor healthcare (Cafer et al., 2019). There is a growing realisation of how disasters and underlying vulnerabilities intersect over time. This requires strategies to build and strengthen community cohesion within changing environmental and social contexts, both in disaster-related situations and everyday development efforts in response to uncertainty.

Resilience for which purpose?

Finally, the above definitions suggest that resilience allows anticipating, coping with and recovering from adversity, whilst also building capacity to manage and sustain development momentum in ways that do not compromise longer-term prospects. We appreciate that these elements promote development ideas which might place responsibilities mainly on individuals and communities. Reluctance to being identified as resilient in certain circumstances relates to higher expectations of peer support or fear of exclusion from development programmes or assistance (UNDP, 2014, p. 8).

The quest for comprehensive definitions of ‘resilience’ is probably more important in textbooks than in everyday volunteering in many contexts or languages wherein the term might not even exist or be widely used. We know, however, that **individuals and communities are constantly learning and adapting to the best of their capacities when faced with challenges**. The *transformative potential* of this learning process lies in understanding how people can become more resilient over time rather than simply returning to where they were before adverse events.

Therefore, we see the resilience of individuals and communities not as a static end state, but **an on-going process of power shifting and adapting to change that leads to constant transformation in directions that are important to the individuals and communities involved**.

The next section builds upon these considerations around resilience to explore how community-based volunteering rooted in existing social structures and support mechanisms can be a means of strengthening resilience and enabling communities to both respond to emergencies and achieve their development goals.

Resilience ↔ Community-based volunteering

We have outlined some of the competing theory and practice concerning the concept of resilience, moving towards an understanding that critically engages with the importance of community resilience both from a sustainable development perspective and in terms of responding to crisis and uncertainty. In this sense, resilience can be a transformative process allowing communities to adapt and respond to the pressures of uncertainty and make the required changes to ensure their members survive and thrive.

Within the existing literature around resilience there is a lot of exploration of what resilience looks like but gaps in terms of understanding how it can be developed, strengthened or supported (Cavaye & Ross, 2019). In this section, we argue that **local/community-based volunteering which builds upon existing social structures and practices can strengthen resilience and allow communities to develop beyond crises**. Community-based and local are herein used interchangeably to qualify volunteering work undertaken by and amongst those identifying as members of the same community.

The 2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report highlights how "volunteering brings people in the community together to achieve shared goals, in the process strengthening solidarity and relational bonds and building trust" (United Nations Volunteers, 2018, p. 29). Understanding the linkages between resilience and community development has prompted a shift from models of external intervention to those inculcating societal agency and responsibility from within communities. By agency we understand "the power people have to think for themselves and act in ways that shape their experiences and life trajectories, individually or collectively" (Cole, 2020).

A similar shift is required to recognise community-based volunteering as not a means of delivering services and development agendas, but rather an example of how people take ownership of community development and disaster response through leadership embedded within local knowledge (see Hazeldine & Baillie Smith, 2015). In this way, community-based volunteering can be a sign of positive agency and decision-making at local levels. This understanding of the connection between community volunteering and resilience maps onto key components often related to resilience: agency, leadership and self-organising.

However, the danger here is that community-based volunteering is seen as a development or policy prescription. We rather argue that **community-based volunteering can be a unifying term used to describe a range of ways in which people as members of a community voluntarily provide social support contributing to community development, which can in turn lead to increased resilience**.

In this line, we argue that the conceptualisation of volunteering within the 2030 Agenda needs to go further, positioning volunteers not just as implementers of the SDGs, but providing recognition of how volunteers are already supporting their communities to shape their own development agendas and future in unique and context dependent ways.

This leads to the question of how external actors – national or international – should engage with or support local volunteers. In its Framework for Community Resilience, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) provides guidance for the role of National Societies in terms of how they can support community resilience. Examples include:

- ▶ Supporting communities to self-mobilise and address their vulnerabilities and hazards from their own resources. (IFRC, 2014)
- ▶ Engaging with communities through local branches and volunteers and recognising the potential of volunteers as agents of change within their communities. (IFRC, 2014)

We see these examples as emblematic of what we are calling **supportive solidarity**. **The role of external actors and agencies is to listen and take time to understand existing community-based models of social support and voluntary action and learn from community members about what types of support would amplify or strengthen these approaches.**

A recent example of this is the external support given to community-based youth clubs in Bangladesh, which has enabled them to educate and protect their communities during COVID-19 – see **Box 1**. Another example of how local leadership and solutions can be amplified is shown by the support of NGOs for community-led action during the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone – see **Box 2**.

Box 1 Bangladesh: COVID-19 response



A national network of youth volunteers in Bangladesh is currently combining online and offline methods to raise awareness about the coronavirus outbreak in their communities and amongst their peers. Community-based youth clubs supported by the organisation Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) are sharing health information with young people in their communities ensuring that everyone has access to accurate information about COVID-19. Through online training activities and a Facebook page, the national network has ensured that community volunteers have access to the right information to carry out door to door sensitisation, advising people on the importance of handwashing and social distancing (Savage & Ahasan, 2020). Young community-based volunteers are playing a crucial role in preparing their communities to respond to the outbreak and protect themselves as the pandemic unravels. The youth clubs were existing spaces for youth volunteering, which have been supported with access to accurate information, an online platform for training and a national network to enhance their work at the community-level during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

Box 2 Sierra Leone: Ebola response



During the Ebola outbreak in West Africa (2014-2016), it was the work of community-based volunteers developing solutions rooted in community knowledge, leadership and action, that proved to be most effective in tackling the virus' spread, as compared to earlier top-down efforts (Oosterhoff & Wilkinson, 2015). Community-led Ebola Action (CLEA) delivered through the Social Mobilisation Action Consortium (SMAC) in Sierra Leone, involved volunteer community mobilisers triggering the creation of collective action plans for locally owned solutions to control the epidemic (Ebola Response Anthropology Platform, 2015). This approach involved volunteers working within local community structures to ensure local buy-in to solutions, which often involved implementation through community by-laws (Bedson et al., 2019; Skrip et al., 2020).

This represents how community-led voluntary action built upon local systems of decision-making, such as CLEA approaches, can lead to communities adapting their behaviour to respond to a health emergency, in this case also improving systems for safe burial and referrals. Learning from this, development organisations in Sierra Leone are using similar models to support communities in areas such as health, education and social accountability. An example of this is the Strengthening Accountability Building Inclusion programme (SABI), part of which involves young volunteers supporting communities to develop action plans around social accountability challenges (see SABI, 2017).

Community-based voluntary action mobilises existing capacities and assets within communities, which can be the spur to strengthening resilience, but is also more likely to emerge from within communities that already possess a greater degree of resilience. Different communities, and different groups within communities, “have different capacities to influence outcomes such as through economic power, social connection, political power, or access to resources” (Cavaye & Ross, 2019). In this way, resilience can be seen as “socially contingent” (Pugh, 2014, p. 134). Therefore, **volunteering and community resilience also need to be viewed in relation to the social and historical factors that lead to differing capacities and inequalities between and within communities.**

Some of the critiques of resilience within the literature (Chandler, 2012; Tierney, 2015) coalesce around how it shifts responsibility onto the individual or community as opposed to acknowledging the responsibilities of other actors. This shows us how community-based volunteering can become a means of service provision or welfare falling to community members who can be in similar positions to those they are supporting. This can lead to other actors, such as the government, abdicating their responsibilities – see **Box 3** for an example of this in the context of women volunteering in community kitchens in Peru.

Box 3 Peru: community kitchens



Community-based women volunteers have been playing an important role in fighting for food security and nutrition and strengthening resilience at grassroots level in Peru. Community kitchens ('comedores populares') started in the 1970s as a mutual help strategy led by groups of women who would acquire food, often through donation or subsidies, and prepare affordable meals communally in response to the ongoing economic disruption (Jenkins, 2011). It remains one of the most significant community-based voluntary movements in Peru, although it has grown and become more institutionalised over time (Kamioka, 2001).

In essence, autonomous kitchens strengthen community resilience not only by the provision of food for the most vulnerable, but also by enhancing collective action, learning and income generation opportunities among women and their communities. The link between community kitchens and women's empowerment, however, needs to be understood carefully. In addition to the possibility of reproducing local imbalances, notably when it comes to leadership roles, women's voluntary force is also at risk of manipulation by neoliberal agendas. Indigenous women's involvement in community kitchens can be appropriated by the capitalist economic system and contribute to a shift in responsibilities, allowing the state to abdicate its duties rather than fostering collective processes of self-empowerment (Jenkins, 2011; Schroeder, 2006).

Acknowledgement of this critique requires efforts of supporting community resilience through volunteerism to recognise that **local ownership is not a substitute for the role and responsibilities of other actors**. There needs to be a balancing and integration of different responsibilities and dialogue between government, local and community stakeholders, acknowledging the interconnectedness of community development challenges. Communities are not isolated units but embedded in broader complex social systems (Cavaye & Ross, 2019; Eversole, 2014), which means that local volunteers' agency will always be mediated by external pressures that may be outside of their immediate control. This also represents an avenue by which organisations can provide supportive solidarity to community-based volunteering efforts, through mediation with other external actors' priorities and advocacy efforts.

An example of how community volunteering can be supported whilst recognising the roles and responsibilities of different actors can be found in **Box 4**, which shows how the local knowledge of community-based volunteers complemented the work of official channels in response to flooding in the United Kingdom in 2014.

Box 4 United Kingdom: response to flooding



In the UK, a study by the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) looked at the role of spontaneous community-based volunteers in response to flooding in Herefordshire, Kent and Lincolnshire in 2014. The study found that community-based volunteers were an important source of local knowledge for official emergency responders. Despite some tensions between community-based volunteers and official responders, especially concerning risks and liability, volunteers were able to mobilise resources through tapping into existing local networks (DEFRA, 2015). In this way, community-based voluntary response to flooding disasters enhanced the work of official channels, strengthening resilience of local systems and affected communities.

Locally defined models of voluntary action can be an important means of strengthening community resilience, both in terms of longer-term development agendas and as a response to crisis and shocks. However, caution is required concerning how this connection is interpreted by actors seeking to support community-based volunteering. **Community volunteering should not be a means of delivering externally defined agendas, but rather should start from the premise that community-based volunteers are already designing and delivering responses to challenges based upon their community's priorities and in turn building their own resilience.** Other actors can provide supportive solidarity to these locally defined models, which can in turn strengthen community resilience. An additional example is found in **Box 5**, showing how local volunteers in Burundi have been supported to create sustainable sources of income through mobilising partnerships.

Box 5 Burundi: income generation initiatives



Despite a protracted context of economic and political instability after many years of civil conflict, community-based volunteering is a lively practice in Burundi. Faced with widespread vulnerabilities, bottom-up income generation initiatives in volunteering ('Initiatives Génératrices de Revenus - IGR') were first conceived within rural communities to become an important tool for promoting community resilience nation-wide. This started when local committees of community-based volunteers at the Burundi Red Cross came together to identify needs and potential ways of creating sustainable sources of income (e.g. producing and selling flour; managing small food shops; accessing cows, pigs or goats). **As an example of supportive solidarity, material needs are scaled up by seeking partnerships which, when successful, allow initiatives to be fully managed by local volunteers.** The initiatives provide funds to assist the most vulnerable in communities, whilst also sustaining volunteers' livelihoods (Bacinoni, Steed, Tolvanen, & Hakizimana, 2011). When channelled towards locally driven enterprises that build upon local knowledge and resources, help from external partners for income generation through volunteering has proven to be a powerful trigger for sustainable development in Burundi – and context-specific income generation initiatives are now spread across the country (Burundi Red Cross, 2018).

COVID-19 has shone a renewed light on both people's willingness to volunteer and the need for volunteers at the community level. For volunteer-involving organisations there is an opportunity to show supportive solidarity emphasising how community-led initiatives rooted in contextual understanding can support community resilience and sustainable development both during COVID-19 and beyond it. However, there are also some concerning developments around government co-option of volunteering agendas into models of service delivery as well as volunteers facing discrimination and being put in danger due to lack of protective equipment during the COVID-19 crisis (Baillie Smith, 2020).

Volunteers are responding to their communities needs and planning for the future but if this is to lead to substantive change we need to move beyond valorising community ownership and agency alone, which can become a justification for not providing the necessary financial and technical support. For community volunteering to build resilience and foster development the different actors involved need to recognise their own roles and responsibilities and offer supportive solidarity to community-led initiatives without dictating agendas.

Key issues and takeaways

☑ Caution in 'labelling' resilience

Resilience has increasingly become part of the everyday vocabulary in humanitarian and development spaces, yet questions remain about what community resilience means across volunteering contexts worldwide. We have suggested that the first step to challenge 'one-size-fits-all' assumptions is to open up questions about the multiple ways of interpreting resilience. There is undoubted recognition of the capacity of individuals and communities in surviving, learning and growing stronger from difficulties. However, we must take into account how historical and social factors contribute to differences between and within communities, leading to class and gender inequalities that can be inadvertently also (re)produced in volunteering spaces. **This calls for caution in the use of resilience as a 'label' in volunteering, and the need to engage with issues of power and responsibility in efforts to amplify local ownership.**

☑ Enhancing supportive solidarity

Integrating community-based volunteering efforts with the role and responsibilities of other actors is a crucial part of recognising that communities are not distinct units but embedded in complex social systems, which mediate the agency and ownership of local volunteers. **The interconnectedness of different actors can be illustrated by efforts of supportive solidarity among relevant stakeholders.** From the Ebola response in Sierra Leone to income generation initiatives in Burundi, we have provided concrete examples of how community-based volunteering can be a means of strengthening resilience based upon local understandings of social action and through external forms of solidarity. This could take the form of direct financial support for community-led initiatives, creating linkages and networks between community-based volunteers and national and international sources of solidarity and partnership, or it could involve amplifying community leadership by creating platforms for dialogue with other actors to discuss development priorities and assign responsibilities.

☑ Volunteering within and beyond the SDGs agenda

The conceptualisation of volunteering within the global agenda on sustainable development needs to unpack volunteers' roles and the multiple forms of citizen engagement driving community resilience. Despite the international relevance and recognition of the Agenda 2030 as the main global framework guiding our shared journey towards sustainable development, the SDGs are often not part of the everyday vocabulary of local volunteers. We need to understand how volunteering is integrated into the SDGs agenda and related policy-making spaces as more than 'service-deliverers' and (re)consider how to effectively account for the efforts of community-based volunteers who might not even be aware of the existence of such international frameworks. Beyond implementing the SDGs targets, volunteers are out there every day supporting communities to overcome local challenges, become more resilient and shape their own development agendas and future.

✓ Advancing volunteering research

Further research is needed to actively engage with local volunteers and explore their roles in supporting community resilience. Detailed accounts on volunteers' lived experiences and their relationships at community level are limited in the current academic literature, notably in relation to Global South contexts. Volunteering scholarship would benefit from more studies on ethnographies of volunteering that can provide contextualised in-depth insights and foster learning on how policies and practices can be improved. **Community members and volunteers themselves should also be engaged as much as possible in research not only as participants, but also in co-design and co-analysis processes that enable them to influence research directions in participatory ways.** This can be done through thinking of local representation and involving volunteer leaders as co-researchers or advisors in collaborative committees formed at the start of a research project, for example. As we continue to learn from volunteers' efforts mobilising at grassroots levels across the globe, and especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is also key to foster applied research that can help bridge gaps between relevant stakeholders and connect volunteers' learning on the ground to policies and systems to support them effectively.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have put forward an understanding of resilient individuals and communities not as a static end state, but an **on-going process of power shifting and adapting to change that leads to constant transformation.** Many will probably neither define what they are doing in their communities as volunteering nor will see the outcome as resilience – and we should not expect reality to be homogeneous. In the midst of this diversity, **we have argued that when community-based volunteering is entrenched in existing social structures and supported accordingly, it enables communities not only to respond to emergencies but also achieve sustainable development, thus increasing community resilience.** We have suggested that the role for external actors is supportive solidarity to strengthen community-based voluntary efforts and that attention is needed to ensure that local leadership is maintained.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the positive role of community-based volunteering in enabling people to cope with and respond to crises. It is also demonstrating the growing need and importance of supportive solidarity. **Community-based volunteers are not a substitute for the responsibilities of other local, national and global actors but rather strategic partners working together with other stakeholders to improve community resilience.** A supportive solidarity approach offers an opportunity to challenge power dynamics within the non-profit and volunteering sector, allowing communities to engage organisations and networks to amplify the impact of initiatives that they create and lead. Learning from meaningful case studies of local volunteers in action across settings, we aim to trigger conversations on how volunteerism is driving communities to formulate and implement their own responses to crises and development challenges, adapting and thriving over time.

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About Emirates Foundation



EMIRATES مؤسسة
FOUNDATION الإمارات

Emirates Foundation is an independent national organization set up by the Abu Dhabi Government to facilitate public-private funded initiatives for the empowerment of youth across the UAE, putting them at the forefront of economic, social and human capital development. Emirates Foundation's works to have empowered and engaged youth contributing towards shaping the future of the UAE. The organization works in partnership with the private and public sectors to encourage social responsibility and enhance youth capacities through programs that meet their needs towards achieving sustainable community development.

The Emirates Foundation has 3 key priorities:

- ▶ To develop youth competencies through empowerment and raising awareness
- ▶ To encourage social responsibility within the private and public sectors
- ▶ To provide all administrative services according to standards of quality, effectiveness, transparency and innovation.

To learn more about Emirates Foundation, Please visit their website at www.emiratesfoundation.ae/ef

About IAVE



International
Association for
Volunteer
Effort

The International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) exists to promote, strengthen and celebrate volunteering in all of the myriad ways it happens throughout the world. With members in 70+ countries, IAVE is the connective tissue of a global network of leaders of volunteering, NGOs, businesses, governments and academic institutions that share a belief in the power of volunteers to make a significant strategic contribution to resolving the world's most pressing problems.

IAVE has four core functions:

- ▶ **Convening.** IAVE brings together leaders from across the field through a series of virtual and in-person events, such as the biennial World Volunteer Conference and regional conferences.
- ▶ **Advocacy.** IAVE serves as a global voice for volunteering, working closely with the United Nations, international NGOs and global companies to call attention to the strategic importance of volunteering as a way to solve problems and improve the quality of life for all.
- ▶ **Knowledge development.** IAVE is a recognized knowledge leader for the global volunteer community, conducting research and providing in-depth reports on current trends and challenges.
- ▶ **Network Development.** IAVE brings together key constituencies to share with and learn from one another – the Global Corporate Volunteer Council and the Global Network of Volunteering Leadership.

To learn more about IAVE, Please visit their website at www.iave.org

About the Authors

Alice Chadwick



Alice Chadwick is a doctoral researcher at the University of Bath, her research explores the role of volunteering within development projects in Sierra Leone and how this interacts with employment and citizenship. At a broader level she is interested in volunteering as a response to crisis and the role of volunteerism within the SDGs.

Alice has previously volunteered with VSO as an International Citizen Service (ICS) team leader in Kenya and Zimbabwe. These experiences ignited her interest in researching the role of volunteering in development.

Alice holds a MRes in International Development from the University of Bath and has previously carried out research for organisations including VSO, Restless Development and CAFOD.

Bianca Fadel



Bianca Fadel is a doctoral researcher in the Centre for International Development at Northumbria University, UK. Her research explores identity and belonging in local volunteering experiences during protracted crises, particularly in the case of Burundi. She is also involved in policy-focused projects with volunteer-involving organisations including IFRC, VSO and UNV.

Bianca holds a M.A in Humanitarian Action from UCL in Belgium and has previously worked as advisor for humanitarian diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brazil. Her experience also comprises the implementation of local youth engagement volunteering projects at the Brazilian Red Cross.

Both authors have contributed equally to this paper.

About the Sub-theme

Volunteerism and Community Resilience – Locally Owned Solutions Delivering Impact

There is a growing realization that emergency resilience activity should be aligned with broader community resilience building and vice versa. The activity and approaches to build community cohesion and tackle, for example, health and well-being issues such as loneliness and isolation of older people, also build community resilience in response to crisis. Building resilience within communities is about engaging community members in considering the challenges faced by the diverse parts of a community that make up its totality. It is about following through on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aspiration 'that no one will be left behind'. Volunteering makes connections, builds networks and stakeholder relationships, aids communication and supports cooperation, vital components for community resilience. The people power of volunteers has been shown to anticipate and challenge issues, take ownership and responsibility, identify novel solutions and give leadership to transformational change.



International
Association for
Volunteer
Effort

VOLUNTEERING TOGETHER TO ENABLE CHANGE AND CREATE A BETTER WORLD

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