Complementary roles are established between different resilience actors based on their strengths and contributions. Partnerships are more strategic and cross-sectoral rather than ad hoc and time-limited projects that involve local volunteers. Approaches are built on volunteers’ own priorities rather than using them as implementers of top-down initiatives. The focus of volunteer engagement covers prevention and adaptation, and long-term issues rather than immediate response and mitigation. The distribution of resources is commensurate with responsibilities, giving greater control to local volunteers who are taking on the burden of work. Inclusive volunteering opportunities are created to benefit from volunteering, such as specific schemes and initiatives for marginalized groups. Connections are created across different groups of people volunteering together, rather than with people from the same background.

Volunteering opportunities are exclusive, e.g., the most vulnerable are only involved in lower-status and informal volunteering. Volunteering is exploitative, e.g., volunteers are expected to carry out roles for other actors but without training, resources, safety and security. Volunteering is extractive, e.g., external agencies seek inputs and information through early warning systems but do not share back with communities. Volunteering is under-resourced, further depleting the limited resources of already vulnerable people in communities as they work to manage risks. Volunteering is underrecognized and undervalued, and may even be stigmatized. Volunteers are focused on short-term actions, such as coping in crises, potentially leading to reduced impact and potential burn-out.

Optimizing the relationship between volunteerism and resilience

• The contribution of local volunteers is recognized and integrated into national and sub-national resilience strategies.
• Volunteer work is resourced but on a time-bound, project-by-project basis.
• The speed and availability of local volunteers are readily deployed to help communities in crisis.
• Local voluntary efforts are utilized in external actors’ projects and initiatives in a top-down way with minimal voice and upward feedback.
• The space for volunteer action is highly controlled by governments and other actors.

• Complementary roles are established between different resilience actors based on their strengths and contributions.
• Partnerships are more strategic and cross-sectoral rather than ad hoc and time-limited projects that involve local volunteers.
• Approaches are built on volunteers’ own priorities rather than using them as implementers of top-down initiatives.
• The focus of volunteer engagement covers prevention and adaptation, and long-term issues rather than immediate response and mitigation.
• The distribution of resources is commensurate with responsibilities, giving greater control to local volunteers who are taking on the burden of work.
• Inclusive volunteering opportunities are created to benefit from volunteering, such as specific schemes and initiatives for marginalized groups.
• Connections are created across different groups of people volunteering together, rather than with people from the same background.

Volunteering creates strong cohesion between people of the same background who volunteer together.
Communities have the ability to determine priorities but this includes decisions on who they extend help to within and outside the community.
There is a lack of coordination between wider actors and local volunteers reducing impact.
Volunteerism is vibrant but not integrated into strategies and plans for resilience.