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This paper draws on an ethnographic study on how local communities particularly affected by the large and numerous wildfires in Sweden in 2018 mobilized local resources to cope with the crisis. We have investigated three villages in the regions most affected by the wildfires (Dalarna, Gävleborg and Jämtlands län). The results to be presented are based on observations in social media and interviewees' descriptions of their everyday-practices during the events of the wildfires. By taking an ethnological perspective focusing the local, we have been able to grasp the local collective and individual responses and mobilisation from different angles, interviewing farmers, hunters, landowners, babysitters and coffeemakers, entrepreneurs and individuals who became involved in different ways during this very intense period. These individuals have described the cohesiveness and importance of local geographical knowledge and proximity in time, as well as the networks of social and economic relations that were activated in the local community. The interviewees also describe how the local mobilization was connected to external actors from different levels in society.

For this panel, we would like to discuss the paradox of voluntariness in relation to the question of remuneration. This is a paradox that reveals the core of the question of "helping out"; what are the reasons and motivational forces for it, how do others perceive help and what if the help serves another purpose than getting closer to the common goal of putting the fire out? This paradox also entails questions of whether, and in which circumstances, voluntarily work might be understood either as a blessing or as a burden. What is at risk if voluntary work gets paid, and what if it does not? Should the state be unaffected economically by crisis in rural Sweden and what will be expected the next time wildfires occurs?

Community response to crises and disasters: From preparedness to practices