

Why volunteering? –Different reasons for getting involved

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It is well known that when crises occur people converge at the crisis site and want to help, however the literature on disaster volunteer motivation is sparse. Volunteers are a diverse group and various volunteers are therefore driven by different motives. Furthermore, the reasons for volunteering are complex and can seldom be described by only one motive. Today the landscape of crisis volunteering undergoes significant change with a decline in 'traditional', long-term, high-commitment volunteering and a rise in more fluid, episodic and diverse styles of volunteering. Thus, why people volunteer in the continuously developing civil society landscape, their motives and influences also undergoes change. The aim of this paper was to study motives for volunteers to get involved in crisis response, and to improve the understanding of the implication of this transformed landscape with new opportunities but also new challenges for crisis response. The data consists of interviews with volunteers involved in responding to the 2014 large-scale forest fire in Västmanland, Sweden. The result indicates that the volunteers are driven by different types of motives. The primary motivation for volunteering is, as also commonly described in the literature, a need or will to do something for others, thus some type of altruistic behavior. However, their volunteering is limited to if they have relevant useful resources such as experiences and knowledge, material or premises, and the time of arrival to the scene.

Community response to crises and disasters: From preparedness to practices