

**YANGON UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS  
DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED ECONOMICS  
MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMME**

**THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERISM IN COMMUNITY  
RESILIENCE: A CASE STUDY OF VOLUNTEERISM IN  
SAGAING TOWNSHIP IN MYANMAR**

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A thesis submitted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master  
of Public Administration.

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This is to certify that this thesis entitled "**The Role of Volunteerism in Community Resilience: A Case Study of Volunteerism in Sagaing Township in Myanmar**" submitted as a partial fulfilment towards the requirements for the Degree of Master of Public Administration has been accepted by the Board of Examiners.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Volunteerism is widely recognized as a strategic approach to addressing a broad range of development challenges. It plays a vital role in advancing poverty reduction, disaster risk reduction, health, education, youth empowerment, peacebuilding, and social inclusion. In times of crisis, community volunteers have consistently stepped forward to deliver immediate, life-saving assistance. This study explores the role of volunteers and their contributions to community resilience and examined the challenges and opportunities of the volunteers in Sagaing township, Myanmar. The study mainly focuses on the network of volunteers from local volunteer organizations, providing a comprehensive understanding of volunteerism in the context of their contributions, motivations, satisfaction, and the challenges and opportunities they face. The study finds that volunteerism has played a significant role in supporting community resilience in Sagaing Township, especially in times of disasters and recovery. Despite challenges like resource scarcity, inadequate training opportunities, and coordination requirements, volunteers expressed a strong sense of fulfillment and a readiness for increased responsibility in enhancing community resilience.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AYVP	ASEAN Youth Volunteer Program
CBO	Community Based Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CPP	Cyclone Preparedness Programme
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
GAD	General Administration Department
IBEC	International Buddhist Education Centre
MRCS	Myanmar Red Cross Society
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UN	United Nations
UNV	United Nations Volunteers

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Rationale of the Study

Volunteerism serves as a vital pillar in community development, particularly through its capacity to empower individuals to organize and collaborate around shared needs. When adequately supported, volunteers can contribute not only during crises but also to long-term resilience building within their communities (Volunteers, 2018).

As noted in global development frameworks, volunteerism contributes significantly to a broad spectrum of priority areas such as poverty alleviation, education, healthcare, youth engagement, climate adaptation, and peacebuilding. It is particularly valued for its role in promoting inclusive participation and reducing social exclusion (United Nations, 2013).

Volunteerism is increasingly recognized as an effective way to address common challenges across the ASEAN region. Issues that cross national borders such as reducing poverty, responding to disasters, and expanding access to education, require joint efforts and regional cooperation. Within the ASEAN framework, volunteerism is seen as a strategic contributor to the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint, promoting people-centered approaches, regional solidarity, and collaborative problem-solving across member states (ASEAN Secretariat, 2016). Initiatives such as the ASEAN Youth Volunteer Program (AYVP) underscore the importance of regional collaboration through volunteerism, which fosters solidarity, promotes cultural understanding, and facilitates the exchange of innovative solutions. These programs serve as exemplary models for empowering individuals, particularly youth, to actively contribute to regional development, while simultaneously cultivating networks that strengthen mutual trust and cooperation.

Volunteers play a pivotal role in disaster preparedness, recovery, and long-term development by sharing expertise and resources across countries. For instance, during natural disasters like typhoons and floods, regional volunteer networks mobilize quickly to provide immediate aid and support recovery efforts (International Federation

of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2022). Accordingly, volunteers play a key role in different kinds of life activities; volunteering makes a significant contribution to the social, economic and psychological well-being of human beings around the world. Until this time, the very basic concept of volunteerism has been understood as a free and willing contribution of individuals to important social and economic activities within a given society (Johnnie, 2006)

Community development involves a process through which residents collectively identify and address shared concerns, fostering sustainable growth and resilience. Organizations and individuals engaged in volunteer work often focus on key areas such as education, health, livelihood support, and disaster recovery, addressing both immediate needs and long-term development objectives.

In the context of Myanmar, where communities frequently face social and economic challenges volunteerism has emerged as a vital mechanism for promoting positive change and community resilience through the participatory approaches. Myanmar's unique socio-cultural landscape, characterized by a tradition of mutual aid and volunteer-driven activities, exemplifies how closely intertwined volunteerism is with community well-being. The resilience and adaptability of volunteers in Myanmar underline their critical importance. By fostering community-led solutions, volunteerism not only enhances the effectiveness of development initiatives but also empowers local populations to take ownership of their futures. This dynamic is particularly vital in Myanmar, where community cohesion and grassroots efforts are key to addressing complex, multi-dimensional challenges.

The synergy between volunteerism and community resilience fosters a dynamic cycle of empowerment, transforming communities from passive recipients of aid into proactive agents of change. This study seeks to examine the significant role volunteerism plays in strengthening community resilience in Sagaing Township, Myanmar, a region recognized for its strong tradition of civic engagement and a deeply rooted culture of volunteer-driven initiatives. By highlighting local practices and collective efforts, this research aims to underscore how volunteerism serves as a foundational pillar in building adaptive, self-reliant, and resilient communities. The township faces a range of social and economic challenges, making it an excellent case study to examine how volunteer efforts contribute to addressing these issues and to community development. Regardless of the region's adversity, local volunteers have been at the forefront of disaster relief, public health initiatives, humanitarian, social

protection and educational support, making significant contributions to community resilience and social cohesion. Despite these efforts made by volunteers, there is limited research focusing specifically on volunteerism in Sagaing township, and hence, this study provides an opportunity to fill that gap while generating insights that could benefit other communities in Myanmar. By highlighting case studies and analyzing volunteer-driven initiatives, the research seeks to provide insights into how volunteerism can be further leveraged to strengthen community resilience and support development strategies.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are:

- (i) to explore the role of volunteers and their contributions to community resilience, and
- (ii) to examine the challenges and opportunities of the volunteers in Sagaing township.

## **1.3 Method of Study**

The descriptive method is used with primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected with a structured questionnaire survey. A total of 161 individuals were randomly selected from the 16 volunteering organizations for the sample. Random sampling method was used in selection of individuals. The secondary data is collected from internet sources and reports.

## **1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

The scope of this study focuses on examining the role of volunteerism in community development, with specific emphasis on the contributions, challenges and opportunities of community volunteers in Sagaing township in Myanmar. Data for the survey was gathered from 161 volunteers from 16 volunteer organizations operating in Sagaing township. The study explored the role of volunteers, and their contributions related to community resilience and examined the challenges and opportunities of the volunteers in Sagaing township.

However, the study is limited to a specific geographic area, which may not fully represent the diversity of volunteerism in Sagaing region as well as across Myanmar.

Additionally, the research relies primarily on primary data from surveys conducted, which could be influenced by the participants' perspectives and experiences. Despite these limitations, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the significance of volunteerism for local community resilience.

### **1.5 Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I introduces the study, covering its rationale, objectives, method, scope and limitations of the study and organization of the study. Chapter II focuses on the literature reviews of the study. Chapter III provides an overview of volunteerism in Myanmar. Chapter IV focuses survey analysis, survey profile, survey design and survey results. Chapter V concludes the study with key findings and suggestions.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Volunteerism and Community Resilience

The concepts of volunteerism and community resilience serve as the analytical foundation of this study. Both are inherently multidimensional and subject to varying interpretations depending on disciplinary orientation, cultural context, and institutional framework. A precise and contextually grounded understanding of these terms is therefore critical for the effective conceptualization and operationalization of the research. (Norris, 2008)

Volunteerism generally refers to the voluntary contribution of time, knowledge, or effort toward the welfare of others, typically without financial compensation. According to the United Nations Volunteers, it enables individuals to actively participate in addressing development challenges while building trust, reciprocity, and shared responsibility within communities. (Volunteers, State of the World's Volunteerism Report, 2011). This definition underscores the voluntary and altruistic nature of the activity, as well as its potential to foster civic engagement and participatory development.

Researchers commonly categorize volunteerism into formal, informal, and mutual aid models. Formal volunteering occurs within structured organizations such as NGOs; informal volunteering consists of ad hoc, often familial or neighborhood-based support; and mutual aid involves reciprocal, community-rooted actions, especially evident during times of crisis (Smith et al., 2020).

Importantly, volunteerism is far from a culturally neutral or uniform practice. Its expression is shaped by historical legacies, religious norms, and social structures (Putnam & Campbell, 2010; Grönlund, 2013). In Myanmar, for instance, volunteerism is deeply interwoven with Buddhist principles of *dāna* (charity or giving), social responsibility, and moral duty. Community members routinely engage in collective labor and mutual aid through religious institutions such as monasteries, local welfare committees, and youth groups (Spiro, 1970; Eth.mpg.de, 2016). These culturally

embedded forms of volunteerism are not always visible within the formal frameworks used by international agencies, yet they constitute critical forms of community capital.

Community resilience refers to the ability of a population to absorb shocks—such as natural disasters, economic disruptions, or social upheavals—and recover in a manner that restores or improves essential functions and social systems (Patel et al., 2017; Norris et al., 2008). Norris offered a widely cited framework that conceptualizes community resilience as a set of interconnected adaptive capacities across four domains: economic development, which ensures access to financial and material resources; social capital, which encompasses networks, trust, and norms of reciprocity; information and communication, which facilitates awareness, coordination, and transparency; and community competence, which denotes a population’s collective problem-solving capacity, leadership, and sense of agency. These dimensions are mutually reinforcing and provide a holistic lens for assessing a community’s resilience.

Volunteerism intersects with all four domains in substantive ways. It contributes to economic resilience by offering services and labor that supplement limited public resources (United Nations Volunteers, 2018). It strengthens social capital by fostering connections and trust among diverse groups (Valastro, 2012; Boeck et al., 2009). It enhances information and communication through peer-to-peer education and grassroots dissemination of knowledge (Kramer et al., 2013; Jokisch et al., 2023). Finally, it cultivates community competence by promoting active citizenship, leadership development, and inclusive participation in decision-making processes (Stukas et al., 2014; Meemaduma & Booso, 2022).

Thus, when examined holistically, volunteerism emerges not merely as a supportive mechanism for resilience but as a core enabler of community agency and transformation. Its embeddedness within local contexts and its capacity to mobilize collective action as a vital element in both immediate crisis response and long-term resilience-building strategies.

## **2.2 Conceptualizing Volunteerism's Role in Community Resilience**

Understanding the intricate relationship between volunteerism and community resilience requires an interdisciplinary theoretical approach. Multiple frameworks from sociology, psychology, political science, and community development provide essential lenses to interpret the transformative potential of volunteer engagement in building

resilient societies. These theories not only offer conceptual clarity but also help situate empirical evidence within broader analytical constructs.

### **2.2.1. Volunteerism and Social Capital**

Building upon the foundational work of Robert Putnam's Social Capital Theory (2000), it is evident that robust networks of relationships, characterized by mutual trust and a strong sense of reciprocity, are not merely beneficial but fundamental for enabling effective collective action and fostering overall societal well-being. Within the critical domain of community resilience, the intrinsic capacity of a community to withstand, adapt to, and recover from disruptive events, volunteerism emerges as an exceptionally potent force. It plays a pivotal and multifaceted role in significantly bolstering a community's innate ability to prepare proactively for potential adversities, execute coordinated responses during crises, and achieve a more rapid and effective recovery in their aftermath. (Aldrich, 2022)

Volunteer efforts are instrumental in the nuanced cultivation of both bonding capital and bridging capital. Bonding capital refers to the strong, dense ties that bind individuals within homogeneous groups, such as close-knit families, neighbourhood associations, or shared cultural communities. These ties provide emotional support, immediate resource pooling, and a sense of belonging. In parallel, volunteerism actively fosters bridging capital, which involves weaker, more diverse ties that connect individuals and groups across different social strata, organizations, or demographic backgrounds. These bridging ties are crucial for accessing external resources, disseminating information broadly, and building broader coalitions. This dual development of both internal cohesion and external connectivity through social capital is absolutely vital during periods of crisis. It profoundly enhances a community's functional capacity by facilitating the swift mobilization of diverse resources (e.g., supplies, skills, financial aid), ensuring the efficient and widespread dissemination of critical information (e.g., warnings, safety instructions, needs assessments), and enabling the seamless coordination of actions among various stakeholders, including local government, NGOs, and individual citizens. A compelling and profoundly illustrative example of this dynamic is evident in the aftermath of the devastating 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan. Empirical research conducted by Aldrich (2012) conclusively highlighted that those communities which possessed demonstrably dense social networks and exhibited high levels of pre-existing volunteer engagement

demonstrated significantly swifter and more robust recovery trajectories. This powerful evidence underscores that volunteerism acts not just as a supplementary activity but as a powerful, transformative force, fundamentally strengthening the very social fabric that is an indispensable prerequisite for a community's enduring resilience in the face of any disaster or significant challenge. (Aldrich, 2022)

### **2.2.2. Community Resilience Through Volunteerism by Empowering Individuals, and Fostering Collective Action**

Drawing upon Zimmerman's Empowerment Theory (2000), a robust framework that illuminates how individuals and communities progressively gain greater control over their lives and exert influence over their surrounding environments, volunteerism emerges as a profoundly crucial and dynamic mechanism. At the individual level, engaging in volunteer activities fosters significant psychological empowerment. This occurs through various pathways, including the acquisition and refinement of new skills, the development of a heightened sense of self-efficacy, and an increased civic awareness that deepens understanding of community needs and systemic issues. As individuals experience this personal growth and agency, their collective participation naturally extends to collective empowerment. This manifests as groups of volunteers mobilize, organize, and collaborate to advocate for change, address shared challenges, and strategically access vital resources for their community. (Zimmerman, 2000)

This multi-faceted empowerment is not merely an outcome but a vital prerequisite for genuine community resilience. It enables a unique form of proactive collaboration that effectively links organic, grassroots efforts originating from the community's core with more formal, established structures such as local government agencies, non-profit organizations, and emergency services. This integration is critical because it facilitates systemic responses to crises, moving beyond fragmented individual actions to coordinated, impactful interventions. Such an approach underscores the indispensable nature of multi-level interactions, where individual agency, group solidarity, and institutional support converge, which are crucial for a community's capacity to not only withstand and recover from adversity but also to adapt and thrive in the long term.

### **2.2.3. Multilayered Ecological Influences on Volunteer Engagement and Systemic Resilience**

Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) provides a foundational framework for understanding human development and behavior. This theory posits that individuals are not isolated entities but are inextricably embedded within a series of nested, interconnected environmental systems. These diverse layers operate in concert, with each system influencing and being influenced by the others, thereby shaping individual experiences and actions. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

When volunteerism is examined through this ecological framework, it becomes evident that an individual's propensity to engage in helping behaviors is profoundly shaped by the multifaceted components of their surrounding environment. This encompasses their immediate relational sphere, such as family and close friends, alongside the interconnections between these proximal contexts, exemplified by the links between an individual's home life and their educational or professional settings. Furthermore, broader community influences significantly contribute, including decisions enacted by local governance, the accessibility of public amenities, and the availability of diverse community programs. Ultimately, even macro-level societal factors, such as prevailing cultural values, national legislative frameworks, and the prevailing economic conditions, play a substantial role in determining the motivations and mechanisms of volunteer participation.

However, the influence is reciprocal; volunteerism is not merely a product of these ecological layers but actively shapes and transforms them. Volunteers often serve as critical conduits, facilitating connections between disparate segments of the community that might otherwise remain disengaged. For example, local grassroots efforts, such as neighbors providing post-disaster assistance, can effectively forge vital links with formal institutional structures, including official emergency services or municipal authorities. This form of cross-system collaboration demonstrates profound efficacy, enabling communities to address challenges, such as natural disasters, with greater coordination and enhanced effectiveness. Rather than fragmented individual actions, this interconnected approach fosters a unified and comprehensive response. Such synergistic cooperation, where individuals, families, local groups, and larger organizations collectively engage and provide mutual support, is fundamentally indispensable for cultivating a community's enduring resilience and its capacity for robust recovery in the face of adversity.

#### **2.2.4. Cultivating Shared Belief and Coordinated Action in Communities**

Bandura's (1997) concept of collective efficacy highlights the importance of shared belief in a group's ability to act effectively. In the context of community resilience, this belief, fueled by volunteer efforts, enables residents to mobilize, coordinate, and respond to challenges with a sense of purpose and unity.

Volunteerism, in its very essence, actively catalyzes the development and strengthening of this collective agency. This occurs through several key mechanisms: the cultivation of shared experiences, where individuals collaboratively engage in common tasks; their direct participation in collaborative decision-making processes, which builds a sense of joint ownership and capability; and their united pursuit of common goals, which reinforces a perception of collective competence. Consequently, communities characterized by a robust and deeply embedded culture of volunteerism consistently exhibit heightened collective efficacy. This enhanced collective belief system, founded on a proven track record of successful joint endeavors, significantly leads to greater efficiency in resource mobilization, reinforcing robust mechanisms for mutual support among residents, and crucially strengthening overall problem-solving abilities in the face of adversity. These attributes are not merely beneficial but are critically vital for fostering comprehensive community resilience, particularly within the demanding contexts of disaster response, long-term recovery, and sustainable development initiatives (Bandura, 1997; Sampson et al., 1997).

### **2.3 Dimensions and Functions of Volunteerism in Building Resilience**

Volunteerism plays a pivotal and multidimensional role in the architecture of community resilience. Its contributions span across sectors and functions, ranging from immediate humanitarian response to long-term development and environmental sustainability. These functions are interlinked, creating a holistic framework wherein individuals and groups contribute to a community's capacity to withstand, adapt to, and recover from adversity. The following subsections elaborate on key dimensions through which volunteerism supports resilience. (Volunteers, The thread that binds volunteerism and community resilience, 2018)

### **2.3.1 Humanitarian and Emergency Response**

The backbone of humanitarian and emergency response often lies in volunteerism. Volunteers are usually the first on the scene after natural disasters or other crises, swiftly mobilizing to provide life-saving assistance before official organizations can step in. Their close ties to affected communities, deep understanding of local customs, and strong personal drive allow them to act quickly and with cultural awareness. (Volunteers, The thread that binds volunteerism and community resilience, 2018)

For example, after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, local volunteers in Sri Lanka and Indonesia were vital in search-and-rescue operations, setting up shelters, and distributing food and medical supplies. These volunteers not only met immediate needs but also supported long-term recovery through reconstruction and psychosocial rehabilitation. (Johnson & Lee, 2007)

In Myanmar, community-based volunteerism has shown similar importance. After Cyclone Nargis in 2008, which devastated the Ayeyarwady Delta, community volunteers, often organized through local monasteries and civic networks, were among the first to establish emergency shelters, deliver food and water, and offer emotional support to survivors. Their efforts bridged the critical gap between the disaster's onset and the arrival of formal humanitarian aid.

More recently, volunteers have continued to be indispensable in Myanmar's response to various natural disasters. During the widespread floods that have affected different parts of the country, local volunteers have been at the forefront, assisting with evacuations, distributing essential supplies, and supporting affected families. Similarly, following the recent M 7.7 earthquake that have struck Myanmar, volunteers have played a key role in immediate relief efforts, helping with damage assessment, providing first aid, and ensuring vulnerable populations receive necessary support. These recent events further highlight the consistent and vital contributions of local volunteers in Myanmar's disaster response landscape.

### **2.3.2 Health Resilience**

Volunteerism also contributes significantly to the resilience of health systems, particularly in resource-constrained environments. Community health volunteers often serve as a bridge between formal healthcare providers and underserved populations, facilitating health education, disease prevention, and access to essential medical

services. Their role becomes even more pronounced during public health emergencies. (WHO, 2020)

In sub-Saharan Africa, community health volunteers have been central to immunization campaigns, maternal and child health initiatives, and the care and support of individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Lehmann and Sanders documented how community-based health workers in countries such as Ethiopia and Uganda contributed to the continuity of care and improved health outcomes through grassroots engagement and culturally appropriate interventions. (Lehmann and Sanders, 2007)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteerism emerged as a key pillar of health resilience across many countries in Asia. Volunteers contributed to awareness-raising campaigns, distributed hygiene kits, facilitated vaccine registration, and assisted in logistics for mass vaccination drives. Their efforts not only supported overstretched healthcare systems but also reinforced public trust and compliance with health directives. (UNICEF Asia-Pacific, 2021)

### **2.3.3 Empowering Communities through Social Reintegration**

Beyond material support, volunteerism contributes to the restoration and reinforcement of social cohesion, an essential component of resilience. In times of crisis, communities often experience social fragmentation, loss of trust, and psychological trauma. Volunteering activities can mitigate these effects by fostering solidarity, mutual support, and a renewed sense of collective identity.

Engaging in volunteer activities has been shown to benefit both recipients and volunteers themselves by enhancing emotional well-being, reducing feelings of helplessness, and instilling a sense of purpose. Musick and Wilson (2008) emphasize that volunteering enhances mental health by increasing social integration, reducing stress, and building empathetic relationships. These psychosocial benefits are particularly valuable in post-disaster settings, where feelings of disempowerment and grief are prevalent.

Moreover, volunteering often leads to the development of interpersonal and civic skills, reinforcing community networks and trust in local institutions. These intangible assets are critical in navigating future adversities and in fostering inclusive community development.

### **2.3.4 Environmental Sustainability**

Another vital, yet often underappreciated, dimension of volunteerism lies in its contribution to environmental resilience. Volunteers play an active role in natural resource management, conservation, and environmental education, activities that mitigate environmental risks and promote sustainability. (Norris et al., 2002)

In the Philippines, for example, community-based coastal resource management programs involving local volunteers have led to the restoration of mangrove forests, the establishment of marine protected areas, and the revival of fish stocks. These initiatives not only enhance ecological health but also protect livelihoods and buffer communities from climate-induced disasters such as typhoons and flooding. (White et al., 2002)

Similar forms of environmental volunteerism are evident in many parts of Southeast Asia, including Myanmar, where community groups engage in reforestation, waste management, and awareness campaigns. Such efforts are indispensable in building ecological resilience and reducing vulnerabilities associated with environmental degradation.

## **2.4 Three Primary Types of Volunteer Engagement Modalities**

Understanding the various types and modalities of volunteer engagement is essential for a nuanced appreciation of its role in fostering community resilience. Volunteerism is not a monolithic activity; it assumes diverse forms depending on socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts. These varying modalities reflect the different ways in which communities mobilize human capital to respond to and recover from adversity. (UNV, 2022).

Spontaneous or emergent volunteerism refers to uncoordinated, voluntary actions initiated by individuals or informal groups, particularly during or immediately after crises. These forms of engagement often arise without prior affiliation to formal organizations. For example, during natural disasters, many individuals offer their support in rescue operations, provision of food and shelter, or emotional support without being directed by institutions. While such volunteerism may lack structure, it is often marked by agility, adaptability, and localized knowledge, making it particularly effective in the early stages of a crisis (Dynes, 2006).

Community-based volunteerism involves participation through organized local entities such as community-based organizations (CBOs), religious associations, women's unions, and youth clubs. These groups often engage in regular, structured

activities that contribute to long-term development and resilience. Their embeddedness within the community allows for sustained engagement, trust-building, and cumulative impact. CBOs often act as intermediaries between government and citizens, translating policy objectives into community action while simultaneously voicing local needs (Fisher et al., 2015).

Digital or virtual volunteering is an emergent form of civic participation, particularly relevant in contexts where mobility is restricted, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic or periods of political instability. Virtual volunteers contribute through online platforms by disseminating information, coordinating aid, providing mental health support, or conducting education campaigns. While still developing in many Global South contexts, digital volunteerism offers new opportunities to broaden participation and scale outreach efficiently (UNV, 2021).

Moreover, these traditional and modern methods are not mutually exclusive. Hybrid models, such as youth groups organizing blood donations via social media or religious leaders facilitating online disaster relief fundraising, demonstrate the evolving nature of volunteerism. As such, understanding and leveraging the full spectrum of volunteer modalities is vital for designing inclusive and effective resilience-building interventions.

## **2.5 Review on Previous Studies**

A growing body of empirical research underscored the critical role of volunteerism in strengthening community resilience across diverse geographic, social, and political contexts. These studies provided evidence that volunteer engagement enhanced local capacities to prevent, respond to, and recover from a wide range of shocks including natural disasters, public health emergencies, and socio-economic disruptions.

One of the most compelling studies in this field was Aldrich's (2012) investigation of community recovery in the aftermath of the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan. The research found that communities with higher levels of social capital—measured through the density of volunteer groups, civic associations, and neighbourhood trust—demonstrated significantly faster and more effective recovery than those with weaker social networks. This suggested that volunteerism not only facilitated immediate crisis response but also served as a durable social infrastructure for long-term resilience.

Similarly, Dynes (2006) provided a foundational analysis of the role of emergent volunteer groups in disaster scenarios. He argued that such groups often outperformed formal government and non-governmental agencies in adaptability, speed, and contextual knowledge. Their effectiveness stemmed from their deep integration within the communities they served, enabling them to act swiftly, understand local needs, and mobilize informal resources. This perspective challenged the traditional top-down models of disaster response and highlighted the importance of community-based volunteerism in resilience planning.

In the context of South Asia, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC, 2014) reported that volunteer-based community preparedness programs in Bangladesh played a decisive role in reducing mortality rates during cyclones. The Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP), which trained thousands of community volunteers in early warning dissemination, evacuation procedures, and basic first aid, had been credited with saving countless lives. The empirical success of CPP illustrated how institutional support for grassroots volunteerism could substantially enhance resilience at the community level.

Closer to the context of this study, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Myanmar (2019) conducted a comprehensive assessment of youth volunteerism in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The findings revealed that youth volunteers were particularly active in areas such as health promotion, educational outreach, environmental conservation, and community peacebuilding—especially in underserved and conflict-prone regions. The report emphasized the dual benefit of volunteerism: it not only supported community resilience but also built the agency and skills of volunteers themselves, contributing to long-term social cohesion and development.

Additionally, research by Patel et al. (2017) in urban and peri-urban communities in Africa and Asia found that communities with active volunteer organizations were more likely to develop successful neighborhood watch schemes, waste management programs, and disaster risk education campaigns. These interventions helped reduce vulnerability and improved community confidence in managing risks collectively.

Furthermore, studies from humanitarian contexts showed that volunteer-led psychosocial support could significantly reduce post-trauma distress and promote community healing. For instance, after the 2010 Haiti earthquake, community-based

volunteer teams played a key role in providing emotional support, information dissemination, and service referral, functions that were essential in the absence of strong public health infrastructure (Pfeiffer et al., 2013).

The case study by Bhiri, Ngwenya, Lunga, and Musarurwa (2024) titled “The Effectiveness of Community Volunteers’ Participation for the Sustainability of NGO Poverty Reduction Projects in Zimbabwe” examined the crucial role of volunteer involvement in sustaining non-governmental poverty reduction initiatives. Focusing on the SOS Children’s Village, the study found that community volunteers played a vital role in supporting project implementation, particularly in settings with limited financial resources. The research revealed that volunteers were primarily motivated by personal satisfaction, interest in the organization’s mission, a desire to help others, and a sense of accomplishment. These intrinsic motivations were reinforced by external incentives such as food packs, medical support, training opportunities, and education benefits for their children, which contributed to volunteer satisfaction and long-term engagement. The study also concluded that satisfied volunteers tended to develop positive attitudes and remain committed to the organization. However, it also identified several barriers faced by volunteers, including lack of resources and inadequate support. The authors recommended that NGOs and governments establish policies and allocate adequate resources to support volunteer participation, recognizing its importance for the sustainability of poverty reduction projects. These findings contributed significantly to the understanding of how volunteerism enhanced community development and resilience in resource-constrained environments.

Aung Lwin Toe studied "The Role of Village Volunteer Groups for Community Development in Htan Tabin Township" offered valuable insights into how locally organized volunteer groups contribute to grassroots-level development in Myanmar. The research highlighted that volunteer groups, often formed on a voluntary and informal basis, played a crucial role in areas such as village sanitation, road maintenance, disaster preparedness, and education support. The study found that these groups enhance collective action, mobilize local resources, and fostered a sense of ownership and accountability among community members. It further emphasized that village volunteerism was deeply rooted in Myanmar’s traditional and cultural values of mutual support. This aligned with broader findings in literature that underlined volunteerism as a driver of community resilience and self-reliance. However, the study also identified challenges such as lack of formal recognition, limited coordination with

government departments, and insufficient capacity building, factors that could hinder the sustainability and impact of volunteer initiatives. (Aung Lwin Toe, 2020)

In another relevant study, Thein Htet Aung conducted "A Study of the Red Cross Volunteers' Satisfaction on Volunteering (A Case Study in Selected State and Region in the Myanmar Red Cross Society)." This research focused on understanding the motivations, levels of satisfaction, and challenges experienced by Red Cross volunteers, who serve as one of the most structured and organized volunteer forces in Myanmar. The study identified several core determinants of volunteer satisfaction, including motivation for volunteering, interpersonal relationships among volunteers, access to training and career development opportunities, conducive work environments, and recognition and feedback mechanisms. While overall satisfaction levels were reported to be high, the study noted that supportive supervision and management were rated lowest among the variables assessed. Crucially, the research established a strong link between volunteer satisfaction and the effectiveness and commitment of volunteers in humanitarian activities. The findings also stressed the importance of respectful treatment, effective supervision, and the provision of necessary resources such as leadership training, equipment, insurance, and psychosocial support. The study concludes that ethical and efficient management of these factors is essential not only for volunteer retention but also for enhancing organizational impact. These insights are highly relevant to understanding how institutional support mechanisms can strengthen community resilience through sustained and motivated volunteer engagement. (Thein Htet Aung, 2024)

## **CHAPTER III**

### **OVERVIEW OF VOLUNTEERISM IN MYANMAR**

#### **3.1 Historical Background of Volunteerism in Myanmar**

Myanmar's tradition of volunteerism is longstanding, rooted in its socio-cultural fabric, religious values, and communal practices. Historically, acts of service, whether religious, civic, or social, have been viewed as expressions of mutual aid and moral duty, particularly within Theravāda Buddhist teachings on generosity (dāna) and goodwill (cetana). These principles gave rise to longstanding communal practices such as temple construction, public food offerings, road repairs, water distribution, community-led maintenance of roads and irrigation systems traditions represented early and organic forms of collective volunteerism long before the advent of formal NGOs or civil society. These practices were not just religious obligations but also expressions of social responsibility and communal solidarity. (Charney, 2009).

Other religious traditions in Myanmar have also nurtured traditions of volunteerism. Among Christian communities, particularly in Chin, Kachin, and Kayah States, church-led volunteer groups have historically played vital roles in education, health care, and disaster response, especially in conflict-affected and underserved areas. Christian missions contributed significantly to the establishment of schools and clinics as early as the 19th century and continue to promote community volunteering through youth and women's groups (Sakhong, 2003). Similarly, Islamic charitable traditions have sustained community-led welfare services in Muslim communities across Yangon, Rakhine, and Mandalay regions (ICG, 2020). Hindu communities in cities like Yangon and Mawlamyine have long supported temple-based social initiatives, including feeding the poor and supporting educational activities (Than, 2017). These diverse religious traditions have helped create a pluralistic foundation for volunteerism in Myanmar.

The colonial period witnessed the emergence of voluntary groups that played both social and political roles. Civic associations, student unions, and Buddhist lay organizations provided social support while also acting as platforms for anti-colonial

mobilization and public advocacy (Taylor, 2009). Volunteerism also assumed a political character during the independence movement. Nationalist leaders like General Aung San mobilized youth and students through volunteer corps and strike committees, turning voluntary action into a tool for resistance. These groups not only organized protests but also ran literacy campaigns and public health drives, blending civic activism with grassroots service. Thus, the colonial period saw the transition of volunteerism from solely religious service to more structured and politically engaged forms of social participation.

Following independence in 1948, and particularly from the 1960s onward, opportunities for formal civil society engagement became increasingly limited due to prevailing political and administrative structures. Nevertheless, religious institutions and traditional community networks continued to serve as vital conduits for voluntary action. Monasteries, in particular, remained central to social welfare by offering sanctuary, basic healthcare, and education. Communities also mobilized organically during natural disasters, demonstrating informal resilience mechanisms that operated in parallel with limited state capacity (South, 2012). Despite constraints on formal civic activity, these enduring practices of volunteerism helped sustain essential public services and preserve the spirit of communal solidarity.

The late 1990s and early 2000s witnessed the emergence of informal community-based organizations, often operating under religious or development banners. These groups focused on health, education, disaster relief, and cultural preservation. Cyclone Nargis in 2008 is often regarded as a pivotal moment in Myanmar's volunteerism landscape. In the absence of timely international assistance, local communities spontaneously organized rescue efforts and aid delivery, demonstrating the latent capacity of grassroots volunteer networks (Latt, 2008).

The subsequent political reforms from 2011 onward allowed a rapid expansion of civil society. Numerous local NGOs, CBOs, and youth networks emerged, promoting volunteerism in fields ranging from environmental conservation and education to peacebuilding and gender equality. MRCS significantly expanded its volunteer base for disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response, becoming one of the largest volunteer-based organizations in the country (IFRC, 2014). The UNV programme also documented a growing culture of youth volunteerism contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (UNV Myanmar, 2019).

The spirit of social volunteerism has been a driving force behind the operations of CBOs, CSOs, and NGOs, empowering them to pursue transformative social change across both rural and urban communities. Over recent decades, local civil society organizations, including CBOs, CSOs, and NGOs, have become essential contributors to community development, particularly by filling gaps in public service provision and advocating for inclusive, community-led approaches (Thura Tun, 2018).

Religious institutions also serve as key hubs for volunteer mobilization. Interfaith volunteer networks emerged to respond to localized crises, and faith-based organizations collaborated with humanitarian actors to deliver inclusive services. This reflected an important shift towards more coordinated, multireligious volunteer engagement, even in complex settings marked by ethnic and religious diversity (ICG, 2020).

The political landscape in Myanmar underwent significant changes in February 2021, which had a profound impact on volunteerism. In the face of changes and hindrances, volunteerism continued to play a crucial role, particularly at the grassroots level. Volunteers contributed to humanitarian aid efforts, supporting displaced individuals and vulnerable communities. Religious institutions, including monasteries and churches served as shelters, provided assistance, and facilitated resolution to the disputes during this period. This situation highlighted the resilience and continued relevance of volunteerism, particularly in meeting critical community needs and promoting social cohesion (ALTSEAN, 2022; South & Lall, 2022).

### **3.2 Volunteers' Contributions Across Key Sectors in Myanmar**

Volunteerism in Myanmar is multifaceted and deeply embedded in the country's cultural, religious, and community traditions. Often driven by grassroots initiatives and a strong sense of civic duty, volunteers contribute across a wide range of sectors, particularly where institutional capacity is limited or absent. These efforts are largely supported and organized through the proliferation of community-based organizations (CBOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), many of which emerged organically from within local communities. These structures serve as vital platforms through which volunteer actions are coordinated, sustained, and scaled. (Volunteers, The thread that binds volunteerism and community resilience, 2018)

The following highlights key sectors of volunteer engagement in Myanmar, illustrated with examples of their practical contributions during major crises and community development initiatives:

### **3.2.1. Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Response**

Volunteers have consistently served as frontline responders during natural disasters such as cyclones, floods, and earthquakes. Their roles include evacuation assistance, search-and-rescue operations, emergency relief distribution, temporary shelter management, and psychosocial support.

A defining moment came after Cyclone Nargis in 2008, when local volunteers mobilized swiftly in the absence of immediate international aid. Monastic institutions, youth groups, and neighbourhood associations distributed food, clean water, and medicine, often through informal yet effective networks. More recently, during Cyclone Mocha in 2023 and Cyclone Yagi and widespread floods in 2024, volunteers were again among the first responders, coordinating early warning dissemination, emergency shelter setup, and infrastructure clean-up (ASEAN-AHA Centre, 2024; MRCS, 2024). The 2025 magnitude 7.7 earthquake further demonstrated the indispensable role of volunteers, with local actors initiating rescue operations and providing life-saving aid in areas inaccessible to formal responders (UNOCHA Myanmar, 2025; ReliefWeb, 2025).

### **3.2.2. Public Health and Pandemic Response**

During public health crises, especially the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteers were instrumental in supporting overwhelmed health systems. Their activities included operating quarantine and isolation centers, delivering food and medicine to vulnerable households, distributing personal protective equipment, and conducting health awareness campaigns.

Healthcare volunteers also helped manage emotional and psychological distress through community-based mental health support initiatives. In remote areas, these interventions were often the only available source of care, reinforcing the importance of community-led health responses (UNDP Myanmar, 2021).

### **3.2.3. Education and Youth Empowerment**

Volunteers in the education sector play a vital role in bridging access gaps, particularly for children in remote, conflict-affected, or displaced communities. Many serve as non-formal educators, tutors, and youth mentors. They contribute to literacy programs, vocational training, and youth leadership initiatives designed to empower the next generation.

In areas where public education is disrupted, such as ethnic regions or informal settlements, volunteer-led learning spaces provide crucial continuity (UNESCO Bangkok, 2019). These initiatives not only enhance educational access but also promote civic engagement among young people.

### **3.2.4. Environmental Conservation**

Environmental issues are gaining traction among Myanmar's youth-led volunteer movements. Activities include tree planting, reforestation, river and forest conservation, plastic reduction campaigns, and climate change awareness. Civil society groups and student-led organizations engage in advocacy and practical action aimed at preserving local biodiversity and encouraging sustainable practices (Fauna & Flora International Myanmar, 2021). These efforts contribute to building environmental resilience at the grassroots level.

### **3.2.5. Humanitarian Assistance and Community Development**

Volunteers regularly support marginalized and vulnerable populations including displaced persons, persons with disabilities, and impoverished communities by providing food assistance, clean water access, temporary shelter, and basic livelihood support. For example, in post-disaster recovery phases, volunteers assist in rebuilding homes, repairing roads, and restoring basic services. In chronic crisis areas, such as IDP camps, volunteers play a critical role in delivering day-to-day services and maintaining social safety nets (Save the Children Myanmar, 2020).

### **3.2.6. Religious and Monastic Social Services**

Religious institutions, particularly Buddhist monasteries, are central to Myanmar's volunteer ecosystem. Monastic and faith-based volunteers provide charity meals, healthcare services, education, and shelter, often acting as de facto social welfare centers, especially in rural and underserved communities. These activities are rooted in

longstanding traditions of *dāna* (generosity) and community interdependence and continue to shape how volunteerism is culturally expressed across the country. (Walton, 2016)

### **3.2.7. Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion**

In conflict-affected areas, volunteers contribute to reconciliation, healing, and community stability. Their work includes facilitating dialogue across divided groups, delivering psychosocial support to trauma survivors, and organizing inclusive community events that rebuild trust. Volunteer-led peacebuilding efforts, particularly among youth and women’s groups, are essential in fostering social cohesion in areas impacted by ethnic tensions and protracted displacement (UNDP Myanmar, 2020; Search for Common Ground, 2019; United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, 2021).

### **3.3 Local Dynamics of Volunteerism in Sagaing Township, Sagaing Region**

Sagaing Township is located on the west bank of the Ayeyarwady River and it is part of Sagaing District, one of the 13 districts in Sagaing Region. Sagaing township holds significant cultural and religious importance as a prominent center of Theravada Buddhism in Myanmar, renowned for the many pagodas, monasteries, and nunneries that adorn the slopes of the Sagaing Hills. Historically, Sagaing served as a royal capital during various periods, notably under the Bagan, Innwa, and Konbaung dynasties, and was once known by the ancient name Anandapura. Beyond its spiritual and historical prominence, the township also exhibits diverse demographic characteristics. As reported in the census released by Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in 2027, the population of Sagaing Township stood at 307,194, consisting of 143,420 males and 163,774 females.

## Demographic Profile of Sagaing Township

**Table (3.1) Demographic Profile of Sagaing Township**

Description	Indicator	
	Total Population	307,194 <sup>2</sup>
Population males	143,420 (46.7%)	
Population females	163,774 (53.3%)	
Percentage of urban population	26.5%	
Area (Km <sup>2</sup> )	1,256.6 <sup>3</sup>	
Population density (per Km <sup>2</sup> )	244.5 persons	
Number of wards	18	
Number of village tracts	81	
Number of private households	65,143	
Percentage of female headed households	23.6%	
Children population (0 – 14 years)	24.1%	
Economically productive population (15 – 64 years)	68.0%	
Elderly population (65+ years)	7.9%	
Child dependency ratio	35.5	
Old dependency ratio	11.6	
Sex ratio (males per 100 females)	88	
Literacy rate (persons aged 15 and over)	97.0%	
Male	98.8%	
Female	95.7%	
People with disability	Number	Per cent
Any form of disability	9,323	3.0
Walking	4,062	1.3
Seeing	4,535	1.5
Hearing	2,392	0.8
Remembering	3,133	1.0
Labor Force (aged 15-64)	Male	Female
Labor force participation rate	84.6%	57.3%
Unemployment rate	2.6%	2.5%
Employment to population ratio	82.4%	55.8%

Source: Census Information on Sagaing Township, Department of Population, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (October 2017)

Sagaing Township, renowned for its deep-rooted traditions of Buddhist scholarship and meditative practice, is home to a dense network of monastic institutions and spiritual communities. These religious and cultural foundations profoundly shape local conceptions of altruism, social responsibility, and collective service—principles that are integral to the region’s vibrant tradition of volunteerism.

Volunteerism in Sagaing is both diverse and deeply embedded in everyday life. Voluntary activities commonly include assistance during religious festivals and monastic ceremonies, participation in health and hygiene campaigns, engagement in disaster risk reduction and emergency response, provision of first aid and safety services, child protection initiatives, funeral support, blood donation drives, search and rescue operations, and recovery efforts. These activities are often carried out either spontaneously or through coordination with trusted local networks, reflecting a hybrid model of formal and informal volunteerism that adapts dynamically to the needs of the community.

Notably, the nature of volunteerism in Sagaing is highly responsive to crisis contexts. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the nationwide floods in 2024, and the recent M7.7 earthquake that struck the Mandalay region, local volunteer groups rapidly mobilized to deliver quarantine and emergency relief services, distribute essential supplies, and support displaced families. These grassroots responses underscore the township’s strong community-based resilience, wherein social cohesion and local knowledge facilitate timely and effective action.

In addition to disaster response, volunteerism in Sagaing extends to the health and education sectors. Lay volunteers contribute to religious schools and provide care and companionship to the elderly and vulnerable populations. Their roles also encompass organizing temporary shelters, conducting public health awareness campaigns, and leading disaster preparedness training. Collaboration with local administrators, religious institutions, and civil society organizations further enhances the scope and impact of these volunteer-led efforts.

Moreover, volunteerism in Sagaing often aligns with broader objectives of strengthening community resilience. Youth groups, religious networks, and village-level volunteer teams frequently integrate informal disaster risk reduction (DRR) practices into their initiatives. These include public education programs, basic first aid training, and community mobilization efforts, all of which contribute to local preparedness and response capacity. Such practices resonate with global frameworks

that advocate for localized, inclusive, and sustainable approaches to building resilient communities.

Based on data provided by the General Administration Department (GAD) in 2023, (36) volunteer organizations were reported to be operating within Sagaing Township. In the current context, however, it is difficult to ascertain an exact figure for active organizations, due to changes in operational environments and constraints related to formal registration processes. Consequently, this study adopts a targeted scope by focusing on the network of the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) and its affiliated volunteer organizations, which continue to operate with official recognition in Sagaing Township.

## CHAPTER IV

### SURVEY ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Survey Profile

Sagaing township has 18 wards and number of village tracts is totaled 81. The total population of the township as of 2014 is 307,194 due to the census information released by the Ministry of Labor, Immigration and Populations. The area of the township is 1,256.6 square kilometer with population density per square meter 244.5 persons. In Sagaing region, there is 92.2% of Buddhist, 6.5% of Christian, 1.1% of Islam, 1% of Hindu, 0.1% of other religion, and less than 0.1% each for Animist and those with no religion respectively. (2014 Census, MOIP).

According to data from GAD in 2023, there were (36) volunteer and philanthropic organizations operating in Sagaing Township. This thesis adopts a focused approach through the network of MRCS and its affiliated volunteer organizations, totaling 16 organizations who are currently active in Sagaing Township.

**Table (4.1) Operational Volunteer Organizations in Sagaing Township**

Sr.	Name of organization
1.	Sagaing District Red Cross Volunteers, MRCS
2.	Township Red Cross Volunteers, MRCS, Sagaing township
3.	Thukha Kar Yi Health and Social Support Organization
4.	O-Bo Health and Social Support Organization
5.	Pyin Nyar Maung Social Support Organization
6.	Htone-Bo Emergency Search and Rescue Team
7.	Min Lann Lu Nge Health and Social Support Organization
8.	Dae Win Ga Ma Social Support Organization
9.	Zi Wa Par La Health and Social Support Organization
10.	Min Lann Merit-based Social Support Organization

**Table (4.1) Operational Volunteer Organizations in Sagaing Township (Continued)**

Sr.	Name of organization
11.	Thaharya Health and Social Support Organization
12.	Myat Su Mon Social Support Organization
13.	Yone Phyu Social Support Organization
14.	Mon Myat Setanar Social Support Organization
15.	Zeyar Myittar Social Support Organization
16.	Thaba Thu Kha Health and Social Support Organization

Source: Sagaing District MRCS

#### **4.2 Survey Design**

For this study, a survey was conducted with nearly 50% of the total 630 volunteers. The respondents, selected randomly from each volunteer organization, make up 25% of the total volunteers. The questionnaire was designed to examine the role and contributions of volunteers in different sectors related to community resilience, and to identify the challenges and opportunities of the volunteers. The questionnaire included predetermined and standardized set of questions to study the demographic information of the respondents, types of volunteering activities that the volunteers involved, motivations for volunteerism, contribution of volunteerism in aspects of community resilience, the overall attitude of the community towards volunteering activities, challenges and opportunities of the volunteers, level of satisfaction towards volunteerism, support towards volunteerism, as well as key factors to encourage and enhance youth participation in volunteer work.

#### **4.3 Survey Result**

The data analysis for this study primarily employed a quantitative approach, utilizing survey questionnaires administered to individual respondents. For the quantitative analysis, frequency and percentage were used to assess various respondent indicators, including social characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, education level, and occupation. The analysis focused on several key areas: the types of volunteering activities undertaken by the volunteers, their motivations for volunteering, contribution of volunteerism to community resilience, the overall community attitude towards volunteering, challenges and opportunities faced by volunteers, their

satisfaction with volunteerism, the level of support for volunteering, and key factors to encourage and enhance youth participation in volunteer work.

### 4.3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the survey respondents, as shown in table (4.2), offer a comprehensive overview of the sample population's age, gender, marital status, education, employment status, and monthly income. These characteristics provide valuable context for understanding the background of individuals engaged in volunteer activities within the community.

**Table (4.2) Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Demographic Characteristic		Number of Respondents	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age			
	Under 18	13	8.1
	Between 18 to 24	41	25.5
	Between 25 to 34	47	29.2
	Between 35 to 44	35	21.7
	Between 45 to 54	16	9.9
	Above 55	9	5.6
<b>Total</b>		<b>161</b>	<b>100</b>
Gender			
	Male	106	65.8
	Female	55	34.2
<b>Total</b>		<b>161</b>	<b>100</b>
Marital Status			
	Married	68	42.2
	Single	85	52.8
	Widow/ Widower	2	1.2
	Divorce	6	3.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>161</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table (4.2) Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (Continued)**

Demographic Characteristic		Number of Respondents	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Education			
	Primary School	8	5
	Middle School	73	45.3
	High School	56	34.8
	Diploma/ Certificate	2	1.2
	Bachelor's degree	22	13.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>100</b>
Employment status			
	Student	17	10.5
	Civil Servant	2	1.2
	Non-Governmental Staff (NGO, CSO, CBO)	31	19.3
	Private (Company/ Agency)	29	18
	Agriculture, Livestock, General labor work	28	18.4
	Housewife	13	8.1
	Retired	5	3.1
	Others	36	22.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>100</b>
Monthly Income			
	Under 100,000 MMK	58	36
	Between 100,000 to 300,000 MMK	85	52.8
	Between 300,000 to 500,000 MMK	17	10.6
	Between 500,000 to 700,000 MMK	0	0
	Above 700,000 MMK	1	0.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Survey results (2025)

The age distribution of the respondents, as shown in Table 4.2, indicates a concentration in the younger to middle adult age groups. The largest proportion of respondents, 29.2%, were between 25 to 34 years old, followed by 25.5% in the 18 to 24 age group. This suggests that the sample is primarily composed of younger to middle-aged adults.

In terms of gender, 65.8% of respondents identified as male, while 34.2% identified as female, reflecting a higher representation of males in the sample.

Regarding marital status, the majority of respondents were single (52%), followed by married individuals (43.4%). A smaller proportion were widow/widower (1.3%) or divorced (3.3%).

The educational background of the respondents, as indicated in Table 4.2, shows that the largest group (45.3%) completed middle school, followed by high school graduates (34.8%). A smaller percentage held a bachelor's degree (13.7%), while 5% had completed primary school, and 1.2% held a diploma or certificate.

The employment status of respondents was diverse, with findings from Table (4.2) revealing that the largest category, "Others," which included dealers, goldsmith workers, motor mechanics, private teachers, tailors and own business, represented 22.3% of the sample. Non-Governmental (NGO, CSO and CBO) staff accounted for 19.3%, while private company employees made up 18%. Agricultural, livestock, and general labor work represented 18.4%. and students made up 10.5% of the sample, while smaller numbers were housewives/retired and civil servants. This suggests a diverse employment background among the volunteers, with many working in non-governmental and private sectors, and others balancing volunteering with other occupations.

In terms of monthly income, the majority (52.8%) of respondents, as shown in Table (4.2), earned between 100,000 to 300,000 MMK. A significant portion (36%) reported earning under 100,000 MMK. Fewer respondents reported higher incomes, with 10.6% earning between 300,000 to 500,000 MMK, and only 0.6% earning above 700,000 MMK. Notably, 0% of respondents reported earning between 500,000 to 700,000 MMK.

### 4.3.2 Volunteers' Engagement and Areas of Contribution by Volunteers

The findings presented in Table 4.3 highlight the broad spectrum of volunteer activities in Sagaing township, with a strong emphasis on disaster response and community-based support, while also showcasing more specialized areas of volunteerism. These activities reflect the diverse roles that volunteers undertake, underscoring their significant contribution to various sectors.

**Table (4.3) Types of Volunteer Engagement**

Type of activities	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Disaster preparedness and response (e.g., floods, fires, storms, earthquake)	126	78.3
Health and hygiene campaigns	96	59.6
Education and training for children/youth	27	16.8
Environmental conservation	36	22.4
Supporting vulnerable groups (elderly, disabled, women, orphans)	73	45.3
Conflict mediation or peacebuilding	6	3.7
Emergency aid distribution	77	47.8
Infrastructure repair (schools, roads, shelters)	33	20.5
Funeral Services	5	3.1
Blood Donation	4	2.6
Child Friendly Centre	2	1.2

Source: Survey Result (2025)

The most common volunteer activity, as shown in the table 4.3, was disaster preparedness and response, including efforts for floods, fires, storms, and earthquakes, with 78.3% of respondents participating in this critical area. This highlights the central role of volunteers in emergency situations and their readiness to address large-scale crises.

Health and hygiene campaigns followed closely, with 59.6% of respondents contributing to public health initiatives. This reflects a strong focus on promoting health and hygiene, particularly in communities affected by disasters or health crises.

Support for vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, disabled, women, and orphans, was also prominent, with 45.3% of volunteers involved in activities that directly assist those in need. Similarly, emergency aid distribution, an essential service in times of crisis, saw 47.8% of volunteers participating, further emphasizing the importance of immediate relief efforts in volunteerism.

Environmental conservation activities engaged 22.4% of respondents, demonstrating a notable commitment to preserving the environment and ensuring sustainable practices within the community. Volunteers also played a key role in education and training for children and youth, with 16.8% involved in such activities, suggesting a significant contribution to the development and empowerment of the younger generation.

Infrastructure repair, including the rebuilding of schools, roads, and shelters, engaged 20.5% of respondents, illustrating the volunteer community's contribution to the physical reconstruction of affected areas.

Other volunteer activities were less common but still significant. Conflict mediation or peacebuilding saw participation from 3.7% of volunteers, highlighting the role of volunteers in promoting peace and stability. Funeral services and blood donation engaged 3.1% and 2.6% of respondents, demonstrating the diverse nature of volunteer roles. The least frequent activity, with 1.2% participation, was at Child Friendly Centres, indicating that while important, this form of volunteerism remains less widespread in the sample.

#### **4.3.3 Areas of Contribution by Volunteers in Emergency and Disaster Response**

The data presented in the table (4.4) highlights the diverse areas in which volunteers contribute during disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. Volunteers are actively engaged in a range of activities, underscoring their pivotal role in supporting communities before, during, and after disasters.

**Table (4.4) Areas of Contribution by Volunteers in Emergency and Disaster Response**

<b>Areas of contribution by volunteerism</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Raised community awareness about disaster risks and preventive measures	101	62.7
Assisted in search and rescue operations during disasters.	113	70.2
Distributed emergency relief supplies such as food, water, and medicine.	122	75.8
Supported evacuation and shelter arrangements for vulnerable groups	80	49.7
Provided psychological support to disaster-affected individuals.	85	52.8
Contributed to post-disaster clean-up and rebuilding efforts	88	54.7
Mobilized donations and coordinated volunteer support during recovery	82	50.9
Strengthened cooperation and communication between community members	75	46.6
Encouraged youth and women to engage in disaster risk reduction activities.	83	51.6
Built partnerships with local authorities and NGOs for better disaster response.	79	49.1

Source: Survey Result (2025)

According to table (4.4), the most significant contributions were in disaster relief activities, with 75.8% of volunteers involved in distributing emergency supplies such as food, water, and medicine. This was closely followed by 70.2% participating in search and rescue operations, demonstrating the vital role of volunteers in life-saving efforts. Additionally, 62.7% of volunteers raised awareness about disaster risks and prevention, which is crucial for building community preparedness. Other key areas of volunteer involvement include post-disaster recovery, with 54.7% contributing to clean-up and rebuilding efforts, and 50.9% mobilizing donations and coordinating volunteer support during recovery.

Volunteers also supported vulnerable groups, with 49.7% assisting with evacuation and shelter arrangements. Psychological support was provided by 52.8% of volunteers, showcasing the growing importance of mental health in disaster response. Furthermore, 46.6% of respondents focused on strengthening community cooperation and communication, and 51.6% worked to encourage the engagement of youth and women in disaster risk reduction activities. Volunteers also played a role in building partnerships with local authorities and NGOs to improve overall disaster response efforts, with 49.1% contributing to this area.

The analysis reveals that volunteers are particularly engaged in high-impact areas such as emergency relief distribution (75.8%) and search and rescue (70.2%), demonstrating their critical role in immediate disaster response. Additionally, volunteers contribute significantly to post-disaster recovery (54.7%) and community building (49.1%). Their involvement spans a broad spectrum of activities, emphasizing their essential contributions to enhancing disaster resilience and supporting affected populations.

#### **4.3.4. Strengthening Community Resilience Through Volunteer Efforts**

The data presented in Table 4.5 used a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree to assess volunteers' views on the results of their contributions across key areas such as community awareness, health improvement, emergency response, and social support. This analysis is based on responses from 161 volunteers.

**Table (4.5) Perceived Benefits across Key Areas of Community Resilience through Volunteerism**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Public awareness on community issues	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.6%)	24 (15.0%)	111 (69.4%)	25 (15.6%)	3.99
Health and well-being	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.2%)	18 (11.2%)	117 (73.1%)	24 (15.0%)	4.01
Emergency response	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.2%)	10 (6.2%)	108 (67.5%)	41 (25.6%)	4.17
Recovery and rehabilitation response	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.6%)	12 (7.5%)	106 (66.2%)	42 (26.2%)	4.17
Fostering social support network	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.2%)	27 (16.9%)	99 (61.9%)	33 (20.6%)	4.01
Social unity and cooperation	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	29 (18.1%)	103 (64.4%)	29 (18.1%)	4.00
Protection of vulnerable groups	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.2%)	11 (6.9%)	103 (64.4%)	45 (28.1%)	4.19
Building trust and cooperation	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.2%)	52 (32.5%)	87 (54.4%)	20 (12.5%)	3.78
Promoting sustainable livelihoods	1 (0.6%)	3 (1.9%)	67 (41.9%)	76 (47.5%)	14 (8.8%)	3.61
Promoting community independence and resilience	0 (0.0%)	3 (1.9%)	78 (48.8%)	69 (43.1%)	11 (6.9%)	3.55

Source: Survey Result (2025)

Overall, the responses reveal a strong consensus among volunteers regarding the positive impact of their involvement. For Community Awareness and Education, the majority of respondents (69.4%) expressed agreement, with a mean score of 3.99, indicating that volunteers perceive their efforts as valuable in raising awareness within the community. Similarly, Health and Well-being garnered significant support, with

73.1% of respondents agreeing and a mean score of 4.01, suggesting that volunteers believe their contributions play a crucial role in enhancing community health.

In terms of Emergency Response, 67.5% of volunteers agreed that their involvement was beneficial, with a mean score of 4.17, highlighting the critical role they perceive themselves playing during emergency situations. A similar pattern emerged in the Recovery and Rehabilitation Response area, where 66.2% agreed, and the mean score of 4.17 further underscores the significance of volunteer efforts in post-crisis recovery.

Additionally, Fostering Social Support Networks received 61.9% agreement and a mean score of 4.01, reinforcing the volunteers' recognition of the importance of building and strengthening social ties within the community. Across all areas, the mean scores ranged from 3.99 to 4.17, reflecting an overall positive perception of volunteerism's role in enhancing community resilience.

#### 4.3.5. Challenges and Opportunities for Volunteers

Table (4.6) provides a detailed overview of the challenges encountered by volunteers in Sagaing Township. The analysis reveals that volunteers face a range of obstacles, with many of these challenges being logistical, organizational, and structural in nature. These barriers significantly impact the smooth functioning of volunteer efforts, with issues such as resource shortages, inadequate coordination between organizations, and limited personal time due to other responsibilities emerging as key concerns.

**Table (4.6) Challenges for Volunteers**

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of resource/ materials	86	53.4
Poor coordination among organizations	60	37.3
Limited institutional support	73	45.3
Lack of recognition	43	26.7
Limited personal time due to other responsibilities	74	46
Health/safety concerns	57	35.4
Gender or social discrimination	0	0.0
Transportation and communication issues	62	38.5

Source: Survey Result (2025)

According to Table (4.6), the most commonly cited challenge was the lack of resource or materials, with 53.4% of respondents identifying it as a significant barrier. Additionally, limited institutional support was noted by 45.3% of volunteers, indicating that the absence of adequate formal mechanisms is perceived as a key challenge. Volunteers also reported limited personal time due to other responsibilities (46%) as a major constraint, reflecting the difficulty of balancing volunteering with personal commitments.

Other notable challenges include poor coordination among organizations (37.3%) and transportation and communication issues (38.5%), both of which hinder the efficiency and effectiveness of volunteer efforts. Health and safety concerns were highlighted by 35.4% of respondents, pointing to the risks involved in volunteer work. Interestingly, gender or social discrimination was not reported as a significant challenge, with 0% of respondents citing it as a concern. Finally, community's low interest or lack of recognition was noted by 26.7%, indicating that volunteers sometimes face a lack of acknowledgment for their contributions.

The responses from the volunteers expressed that many volunteers face in Sagaing Township. A significant number of volunteers struggle to balance their family responsibilities, such as providing for their families and caring for children with their volunteer work. Many mentioned feeling that they have limited time due to other commitments, often resulting in a conflict between volunteering and their paid work, especially when financial pressures from family members arise. In particular, spouses and family members sometimes encourage volunteers to focus on earning an income rather than dedicating time to volunteering. Volunteers also expressed concerns about safety, especially during emergency response activities and the COVID-19 pandemic, where fears about health risks and exposure were prevalent. Beyond these practical challenges, many volunteers described feeling psychologically strained by the weight of their responsibilities, often feeling torn between their duties to their families and their commitment to volunteer work. These responses highlight the significant emotional and personal challenges that shape the volunteer experience.

In addition to the personal and logistical challenges, volunteers in Sagaing Township also face significant risks related to the nature of their work. According to the survey results, many volunteers highlighted the dangers of volunteering during emergency situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, floods, and the recent earthquake. Some respondents expressed concern about the potential for exposure to

the virus while engaging in community relief efforts. Furthermore, some volunteers shared harrowing experiences of physical harm, with one volunteer recounting an incident where they were struck by a collapsed building while assisting with rescue operations. These responses underscore the serious risks that volunteers encounter during crises, where their commitment to aiding the community sometimes places them in harm's way. The willingness to help others often comes with the reality of dangerous conditions, highlighting the vulnerability of volunteers in the face of disasters.

**Table (4.7) Opportunities for Volunteers**

<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Broader scope of knowledge	119	73.9
Improved job skills	97	60.2
Expanded social networks	89	55.3
Increased self-esteem and confidence	119	73.9
Greater understanding of community issues	118	73.3
Strengthened leadership skills	77	47.8

Source: Survey Result (2025)

Table (4.7) examines the various opportunities that volunteers in Sagaing Township perceive as benefits of their involvement. These results illustrate that volunteering not only benefits the community but also provides significant personal and professional growth opportunities for the volunteers themselves.

According to table 4.7, Personal growth and development emerged as the most significant opportunity, with 73.9% of respondents recognizing it as a major benefit. Similarly, increased self-esteem and confidence also received 73.9% agreement, reflecting the positive impact volunteering has on personal empowerment.

Greater understanding of community issues was another important opportunity, with 73.3% of volunteers acknowledging that their volunteer work deepens their awareness of local contexts. Additionally, enhanced professional skills or qualifications were noted by 60.2% of respondents, showing that volunteers value the experience gained in terms of career development.

Volunteers also reported the opportunity to expand their social networks, with 55.3% noting the value of connecting with others through their work. Lastly,

strengthened leadership skills were identified by 47.8% of volunteers, demonstrating that involvement in volunteer activities helps build key leadership capabilities.

Based on the follow-up questions on the training opportunities, the results reveal that 45.3% of the respondents (73 out of 161) have received some form of training, while 54.7% (88 out of 161) have not participated in any training programs. For those who have received training, several key programs were mentioned, including First Aid, Search and Rescue, and Emergency Response, which are essential for volunteers to provide timely and effective assistance during emergency settings. Specific training programs cited by respondents included Basic Life Support, Shelter Management, and Disaster Risk Reduction, which are all critical for addressing the needs of affected communities in times of crisis.

Additionally, some volunteers noted participation in specialized courses such as Psychosocial Support (CEA and PGI), which focuses on addressing the mental health and well-being of disaster-affected populations. Training provided by organizations like IBEC (International Buddhist Education Centre-United Nations) in collaboration with relevant UN agencies, as well as programs related to Natural Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response Operations, were also highlighted. These programs were primarily conducted by MRCS, relevant UN agencies and Search and Rescue Teams, providing volunteers with hands-on experience and knowledge required for effective disaster management.

**Table (4.8) Support Received by Volunteers**

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Training and capacity-building workshops	58	36
Resource provision	40	24.8
Access to tools, equipment, or materials	76	47.2
Logistical or transportation support	24	14.9
Technical guidance or expert advice	59	36.6
Information sharing or communication support	11	6.8
Coordination and networking with other volunteers or groups	103	64
Moral or psychosocial support	77	47.8
Recognition or incentives (e.g., certificates, awards)	40	24.8
No support received from partnerships or collaboration	11	6.8

Source: Survey Result (2025)

Table 4.8 presents the support received by volunteers in Sagaing Township. A majority of volunteers (64%) benefit from coordination and networking, which helps address logistical challenges. 47.2% receive tools and materials, while 47.8% gain moral or psychosocial support, which is crucial for managing stress and sustaining long-term commitment. 36% reported receiving training and capacity-building workshops, improving their preparedness.

However, financial support and recognition were received by only 24.8% of volunteers, indicating a significant gap in the external incentives that could help motivate and sustain volunteer efforts. This suggests that many volunteers are not receiving the acknowledgment or resources necessary to maintain their enthusiasm and commitment. Furthermore, only 6.8% of volunteers reported receiving information sharing support, highlighting a critical area for improvement in volunteer communication.

According to the table (4.8), 6.8% of volunteers reported receiving no support at all, which underscores a critical need for more comprehensive and consistent support systems to better assist volunteers. Additionally, 6.8% reported receiving information sharing support, signaling a need for improved communication.

#### 4.3.6 Satisfaction of volunteers and Community's attitude towards volunteerism

Table (4.9) presents the findings regarding volunteers' satisfaction with their involvement in volunteer activities in Sagaing Township using the Five-point Likert Scale. The results reflect a generally positive level of satisfaction across various areas of volunteer work, with mean scores ranging from 3.42 to 4.40.

**Table (4.9) Satisfaction on Volunteerism**

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
I feel a strong sense of personal fulfilment from my volunteer work.	1 (0.6%)	2 (1.2%)	22 (13.7%)	97 (60.2%)	39 (24.2%)	4.06
I am satisfied with the support I receive from the organization or community leaders.	2 (1.2%)	21 (13.0%)	50 (31.1%)	59 (36.6%)	29 (18.0%)	3.57
I have received sufficient training to carry out my volunteer duties.	5 (3.1%)	16 (9.9%)	58 (36.0%)	70 (43.5%)	12 (7.5%)	3.42
My contributions as a volunteer are recognized and appreciated	0 (0.0%)	4 (2.5%)	49 (30.4%)	77 (47.8%)	31 (19.3%)	3.84
I am satisfied with the communication and coordination among volunteers.	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.2%)	24 (14.9%)	109 (67.7%)	26 (16.1%)	3.99
I feel that my volunteer work contributes meaningfully to community resilience.	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.2%)	34 (21.1%)	96 (59.6%)	29 (18.0%)	3.94
The workload and responsibilities I have as a volunteer are manageable	0 (0.0%)	5 (3.1%)	76 (47.2%)	52 (32.3%)	28 (17.4%)	3.64
I feel motivated to continue volunteering in the future.	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	13 (8.1%)	101 (62.7%)	47 (29.2%)	4.21
I feel a sense of belonging and connection with other volunteers.	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.6%)	22 (13.7%)	114 (70.8%)	24 (14.9%)	4.00
Overall, I am satisfied with my experience as a community volunteer	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (6.8%)	75 (46.6%)	75 (46.6%)	4.40

Source: Survey Result (2025)

According to Table (4.9), volunteers strongly expressed satisfaction with their experience as community volunteers with a mean score of 4.40. The highest level of satisfaction was reported in relation to personal fulfillment, where 60.2% of volunteers strongly agreed that their work provides a strong sense of personal fulfillment, resulting in a mean score of 4.06. This suggests that volunteering offers volunteers a deep sense of purpose and achievement. Similarly, self-esteem and confidence were positively impacted, with 73.9% of respondents agreeing that volunteering has boosted their self-worth, further contributing to overall satisfaction.

Volunteers also expressed high satisfaction with communication and coordination within their teams, with 67.7% agreeing and a mean score of 3.99, suggesting that volunteers feel adequately informed and supported in their activities.

In term of the support from the organization or community leaders, only 36.6% of respondents expressed agreement, with 31.1% remaining neutral, resulting in a relatively low mean score of 3.57. This highlights a significant gap in the support provided to volunteers, indicating that while some appreciation exists, there is a critical need for improvement in this area to ensure volunteers feel adequately supported.

Similarly, training opportunities remain a clear area for development, with a mean score of 3.42. This indicates that many volunteers feel they have not received the necessary training to effectively perform their roles. Addressing this shortcoming is essential to enhance volunteer preparedness and satisfaction.

Overall, the findings reflect a strong sense of satisfaction among volunteers, with a majority indicating that they find value in their roles. However, there are areas, such as training and organizational support, where further improvements could enhance the volunteer experience.

The survey also studies about the collaboration and recognition of the community on volunteering activities through open-ended questions. The results reveal strong support for volunteerism in Sagaing Township with 92.5% of respondents agreeing there is effective collaboration in volunteer efforts, while 7.5% were neutral. This suggests that the community generally perceives a high level of collaboration and teamwork among volunteers, which contributes to the inclusive success of volunteer activities.

When it comes to recognition of volunteer efforts, 88% of respondents reported that they feel their contributions are acknowledged, with only 11.4% disagreeing. This indicates a generally positive attitude towards recognizing volunteers' hard work.

However, although it is a significantly small portion, 0.6% of respondents felt their efforts were not recognized, suggesting that there may still be some room for improvement in how volunteers' contributions are celebrated and valued by the community.

#### **4.3.7 Key Factors to Encourage and Enhance Youth Participation in Volunteer Work**

Table 4.10 highlights the critical factors that need to be fostered to encourage and enhance youth participation in volunteer work. The data reveals several strategies that not only increase the likelihood of youth involvement but also sustain their long-term engagement. These factors provide insight into what motivates youth to volunteer, pointing to the importance of aligning volunteer opportunities with their personal interests, offering supportive environments, and ensuring skill-building opportunities. Understanding these key factors is essential for creating a volunteer framework that resonates with young people, fostering both immediate participation and ongoing commitment to community service.

**Table (4.10) Key Factors to Encourage and Enhance Youth Participation in Volunteer Work**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Providing opportunities for skill development and personal growth	94	58.4
Offering recognition and rewards for volunteer efforts	96	59.6
Integrating volunteer activities into school curricula or extracurricular programs	66	41
Creating volunteer opportunities that align with youth interests and passions	112	69.6
Providing mentorship and guidance from experienced volunteers	104	64.6
Utilizing social media and digital platforms to promote volunteer opportunities	44	27.3
Organizing group volunteer activities to foster a sense of community	108	67.1

Source: Survey Result (2025)

According to table (4.10), the most impactful factors identified were providing volunteer opportunities that align with youth interests and passions (69.6%) and organizing group volunteer activities to foster a sense of community (67.1%). These factors highlight the importance of creating volunteer opportunities that resonate with youth interests and provide a sense of belonging, which can significantly boost engagement.

Another critical factor is providing mentorship and guidance from experienced volunteers, with 64.6% of respondents agreeing that such support helps young people grow in their volunteer roles. Similarly, offering recognition and rewards for volunteer efforts (59.6%) was highlighted as a strong motivator for youth, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging their contributions.

Additionally, providing opportunities for skill development and personal growth (58.4%) was also seen as a key factor, underlining the importance of giving youth the chance to develop new skills and enhance their personal growth through volunteering.

Integrating volunteer activities into school curricula or extracurricular programs was suggested by 41% of respondents, indicating that making volunteerism a more formal part of education could help increase youth involvement. Lastly, utilizing social media and digital platforms to promote volunteer opportunities was the least prioritized factor, with only 27.3% supporting this approach, suggesting that while digital tools can be effective, they may not be the central method for engaging youth.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Findings**

Volunteerism in Sagaing Township has seen significant growth following the M.7.7 earthquake that struck Myanmar in March 2025. Sagaing was one of the regions most affected by the earthquake, which caused considerable destruction in the community. In addition to the aftermath of the earthquake, the township has faced other challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, floods, and displacement resulting from ongoing conflicts in the area. Despite these challenges, volunteer activities have played a crucial role in enhancing community resilience, fostering cooperation between volunteers and the local community.

Volunteer activities in Sagaing Township are varied and focused on addressing the immediate needs of the community, particularly in the aftermath of natural disasters. Disaster preparedness and response emerged as the most common volunteer activity, with volunteers playing a crucial role in addressing the challenges posed by floods, fires, storms, and earthquakes. This highlights the central importance of volunteers in managing emergencies and providing immediate relief during large-scale crises. Additionally, volunteers have been actively engaged in supporting vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, disabled, women, and orphans, demonstrating the community's focus on providing essential care and assistance to those most in need during crises.

The findings reveal that volunteerism in Sagaing is predominantly driven by youth to middle-aged individuals, with the majority having volunteered for 1 to 5 years or longer. Volunteers are primarily motivated by invitations from organizations, personal initiatives, or inspiration from specific events or crises. A significant proportion of volunteers come from NGOs, local CSOs, and philanthropist organizations, indicating the strong involvement of civil society in supporting volunteer efforts. Community collaboration with volunteers is notably high, with many respondents agreeing that the community works well with volunteers. Furthermore,

community recognition of volunteer contributions was widely acknowledged, emphasizing the value and appreciation of volunteer work within the community.

Volunteer efforts in Sagaing Township have brought about significant positive changes in the community. The contributions of volunteers have not only enhanced immediate relief efforts but have also played a key role in fostering long-term resilience. Through their collective actions, volunteers have strengthened community ties, increased awareness, and promoted a more proactive approach to addressing both natural and health-related disasters.

The contributions of volunteer work have led to significant positive changes within the community. Notably, collaboration among community members has strengthened, with a growing willingness to work together, especially in times of natural disasters. Volunteer efforts have led to increased awareness of health and disaster-related knowledge, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic and natural calamities like floods and earthquakes. This heightened awareness has improved the community's ability to respond effectively to emergencies.

The community has also become more proactive in disaster prevention, with individuals showing greater awareness of potential risks and taking steps to mitigate them. The willingness of people, especially youth, to engage in volunteer activities has risen, and there has been a noticeable increase in cooperation between different organizations, such as during relief efforts following earthquakes and floods.

Furthermore, the volunteer work has fostered a stronger sense of social solidarity. Individuals are more inclined to assist one another, and mutual support within the community has grown. Volunteers have also contributed to rebuilding efforts, such as reconstructing homes and providing essential resources during crises, which has alleviated some of the hardships faced by affected families.

Volunteers in Sagaing Township faced a range of personal and logistical challenges that affected the effectiveness of their contributions. A major barrier was the shortage of resources and essential materials, compounded by limited institutional support, which constrained the scale and sustainability of volunteer efforts. Additionally, many volunteers found it difficult to balance personal responsibilities, such as family obligations and paid employment, with their volunteer commitments, often resulting in time limitations and emotional strain.

Additionally, logistical obstacles such as poor coordination among organizations and issues with transportation and communication hinder the smooth

execution of volunteer activities. Safety concerns, particularly during high-risk situations like emergency response efforts and the COVID-19 pandemic, also pose significant risks to volunteers. Despite these challenges, many volunteers continue to dedicate themselves to their work, although some feel underappreciated due to a lack of community recognition. The risks volunteers face, including physical harm during emergency operations, further highlight their vulnerability. Despite these challenges, the resilience and dedication of volunteers continued to shape their contributions, demonstrating a strong commitment to supporting their community, even in the face of significant obstacles.

The survey findings reveal several key benefits gained from volunteer work in Sagaing Township. Volunteers reported significant personal growth and development, with many highlighting an increase in self-esteem and confidence. In addition, volunteerism provided opportunities for enhanced professional skills and qualifications, contributing to personal and career advancement. Volunteers also noted the value of expanding their social networks, forging connections within and beyond their communities. Moreover, involvement in volunteer activities fostered a deeper understanding of community issues, allowing volunteers to gain insight into the challenges faced by their peers and the broader community. These benefits collectively enhanced the volunteer experience, offering both personal and professional rewards.

The findings indicate that improved opportunities substantially increase the community's enthusiasm for participating in volunteer work. The availability of more opportunities encourages greater involvement, suggesting that accessible and meaningful volunteer options are pivotal in motivating individuals to engage in volunteer efforts. This underscores the importance of providing well-organized and appealing opportunities to foster enhanced community participation.

It is highlighted that volunteerism is viewed as a critical driver for the resilience and development of Sagaing Township, with a substantial majority of respondents, 70%, recognizing its importance. In addition, there is a strong desire within the community to take on more active roles, as nearly 93% of respondents expressed interest in assuming coordination or leadership positions within volunteer programs. This enthusiasm underscores a collective commitment to not only supporting volunteer initiatives but also actively promoting and expanding volunteerism to further strengthen the township's resilience.

## 5.2 Suggestions

Building on the finding that disaster preparedness and response are the most common forms of volunteer activity in Sagaing Township, with volunteers playing a pivotal role in emergency management, a focused effort is needed to design and implement robust, community-based disaster preparedness training. These capacity-building initiatives should be developed collaboratively by technical experts, local authorities, and community leaders, ensuring they are contextually relevant and aligned with volunteers' roles in disaster risk reduction and resilience. Additionally, integrating volunteers into emergency response planning and simulation exercises would bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, thereby cultivating a more effective and coordinated community response system.

Given the reported coordination challenges and the increasing cooperation observed among various actors, it is essential to establish formal partnerships between government bodies, NGOs, and local volunteer groups. These partnerships should be based on clearly defined roles and shared development objectives. At the township level, assigning dedicated focal points for volunteer engagement can help streamline coordination. Moreover, regular coordination meetings among stakeholders would facilitate joint planning, information sharing, and resource optimization. Reflecting on the expression of interest by the respondents in leadership roles, integrating volunteer representatives into township or village development committees could ensure that their perspectives are reflected in local planning and decision-making processes.

To address persistent challenges such as insufficient resources, institutional support, and the difficulty of balancing volunteerism with personal responsibilities, practical support systems should be strengthened. This includes the provision of small-scale resources or essential materials like emergency kits and equipment to enable effective volunteer activities. For sustained engagement, consideration should also be given to reimbursing volunteers for expenses related to their service, especially in medium and long-term initiatives. Although community recognition was reported, some volunteers still felt underappreciated, indicating a need to cultivate a stronger culture of appreciation. Public acknowledgment through local events, media coverage, or official commendation programs may reinforce the value of volunteerism. Furthermore, establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will help assess the outcomes of volunteer efforts and guide improvements in program implementation.

With youth and middle-aged individuals making up the majority of active volunteers in Sagaing Township, it is important to create targeted outreach efforts to deepen their involvement. These could be incorporated into school curricula or community youth programs, reinforcing the role of youth in local development. In light of the reported personal and professional benefits of volunteering, such as enhanced self-confidence, new skills, and expanded networks, it is also beneficial to promote volunteerism as a means of personal growth and career development. Emphasizing leadership, skill-building, and mentorship opportunities can further motivate participation and ensure a diverse and committed volunteer base.

In conclusion, investing in volunteer capacity through capacity building training, strengthening coordination among diverse stakeholders, ensuring consistent support and recognition for volunteers, and promoting inclusive engagement, particularly among youth, can collectively reinforce community resilience in Sagaing Township. These interconnected efforts, if thoughtfully implemented, have the potential to not only enhance immediate disaster response and recovery but also contribute to the township's broader goals of long-term development and social cohesion.

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- Myanmar earthquake situation report No. 3.* <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar>
- Locals lead earthquake response efforts in Sagaing.* <https://www.mmtimes.com>
- Local Facts.* <https://gad.gov.mm/district-townships.php?stateID=6>
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- Integrating volunteering in the next decade (Resolution 67/138).* <https://www.unv.org/publications/unga-resolution-67138-integrating-volunteering-next-decade>
- Flood situation report #2.* <https://myanmar.un.org/en/279207-myanmar-flood-situation-report-2-20-september-2024#>:
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- State of the world's volunteerism report: The thread that binds volunteerism and community resilience.* [https://www.unv.org/sites/default/files/UNV\\_SWVR\\_2018\\_English\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.unv.org/sites/default/files/UNV_SWVR_2018_English_WEB.pdf)
- The role of volunteers in building community resilience in Southeast Asia.* <https://www.unv.org/>

# APPENDIX

## SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

### Section A: Respondent's Demographic and Background Information

1. **Full Name (Optional):** \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Gender:**

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

3. **Age Group:**

- Under 18
- 18–24
- 25–34
- 35–44
- 45–54
- 55 and above

4. **Marital Status:**

- Single
- Married
- Widowed
- Divorced

5. **Educational Qualification:**

- No formal education
- Primary school
- Middle school
- High school
- Diploma/Certificate
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree or above

**6. Occupation:**

- Student
- Government employee
- NGO/CSO worker
- Private sector employee
- Farmer/Laborer
- Homemaker
- Retired
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Monthly Household Income (Optional):**

- Below 100,000 MMK
- 100,000–299,999 MMK
- 300,000–499,999 MMK
- 500,000–699,999 MMK
- 700,000 MMK and above

**8. Do you belong to or participate in any volunteer organization or group?**

- Yes
- No

If yes, name of organization: \_\_\_\_\_

**9. How long have you been volunteering?**

- Less than 1 year
- 1–2 years
- 3–5 years
- More than 5 years

**10. How did you first get involved in volunteer work?**

- Invited by an organization
- Recommended by community or religious leader
- Inspired by a specific event/crisis
- Personal initiative
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Section B: Role and Contributions of Volunteers**

**11. What types of volunteer activities have you been involved in? (Check all that apply)**

- Disaster preparedness and response (e.g., floods, fires, storms, earthquake)
- Health and hygiene campaigns
- Education and training for children/youth
- Environmental conservation
- Supporting vulnerable groups (elderly, disabled, women, orphans)
- Conflict mediation or peacebuilding
- Emergency aid distribution
- Infrastructure repair (schools, roads, shelters)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**12. On average, how often do you volunteer?**

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Occasionally / During emergencies only

**13. What motivates you to volunteer in your community? (Check all that apply)**

- Religious or spiritual values
- Sense of responsibility to help others
- Desire to gain experience or skills
- Influence of family/friends
- Recognition or appreciation
- Want to improve community well-being
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**14. Which organizations do you volunteer with? (Check all that apply)**

- Local community-based organizations (CBOs)
- Local NGOs
- International NGOs
- Religious or faith-based organizations
- Government departments
- Informal volunteer groups or networks

**15. How do you think your volunteer activities have helped strengthen your community's ability to prepare for, respond to, or recover from emergencies?**

*(Check all that apply)*

- Raised community awareness about disaster risks and preventive measures.
- Assisted in search and rescue operations during disasters.
- Distributed emergency relief supplies such as food, water, and medicine.
- Supported evacuation and shelter arrangements for vulnerable groups.
- Provided emotional and psychological support to disaster-affected individuals.
- Contributed to post-disaster clean-up and rebuilding efforts.
- Mobilized donations and coordinated volunteer support during recovery.
- Strengthened cooperation and communication between community members.
- Encouraged youth and women to engage in disaster risk reduction activities.
- Built partnerships with local authorities and NGOs for better disaster response.

**16. In your view, how well do local people participate in or support community resilience efforts led by volunteers?**

- Well/ very well
- Not at all
- Not sure

**17. What factors encourage or discourage people in your community from participating in volunteer-based resilience programs? *(Check all that apply)***

- Sense of responsibility and connection to the local community
- Personal satisfaction and happiness from helping others
- Support from local organizations, NGOs, or government (e.g. training, resources)
- Recognition and appreciation for volunteer contributions
- Flexible volunteering opportunities that suit people's schedules
- Strong leadership and good coordination in volunteer programs
- Potential personal growth and professional development through volunteering
- Positive past experiences in volunteering
- Exposure to volunteer activities on social media, inspiring personal involvement
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

**18. What factors encourage or discourage people in your community from participating in volunteer-based resilience programs? (Check all that apply)**

- Lack of time due to work or family responsibilities
- Lack of awareness about volunteer opportunities
- No or low recognition for volunteer contributions
- Fear of personal risk or injury during volunteer work
- Feeling excluded and reluctant due to religion, ethnicity, or social group
- Lack of proper training or guidance
- Concerns due to the lack of past volunteering experience
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

**19. How would you describe the overall level of benefit of volunteerism on the following aspects of community resilience? (Rate from 1 = No Impact to 5 = High Impact)**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Community awareness and education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and well-being	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency response	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recovery and rehabilitation response	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fostering Social Support Network	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social unity and cooperation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protection of vulnerable groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Building trust and cooperation among diverse groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promoting sustainable livelihoods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**20. Do you think the contribution of volunteers is well recognized by your community?**

- Yes
- No

**21. In general, how do you perceive the impact of volunteer work on the community of Sagaing?**

- Very impactful
- Somewhat impactful
- Not sure
- Not impactful

**22. Have you seen any changes in the community's ability to respond to crises/challenges (any kind) due to volunteer efforts? Please give examples for these changes.**

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**Section C: Challenges and Opportunities for Volunteers**

**23. What are the biggest challenges you face as a volunteer? (Check all that apply)**

- Lack of resources or materials
- Poor coordination among organizations
- Lack of government support
- Community's low interest or lack of recognition
- Limited personal time due to other responsibilities
- Health/safety concerns
- Gender or social discrimination
- Transportation and communication issues
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**24. In your opinion, what kind of support would increase your effectiveness as a volunteer? (Choose up to 3)**

- Financial support or stipends
- Regular training and capacity building
- Access to tools/equipment
- Better planning and coordination
- Recognition or rewards
- Emotional/psychological support
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**25. Have you encountered any risks or dangers while volunteering (e.g., conflict zones, natural disasters, political issues)?**

- Yes
- No

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

**26. Have you ever been trained to respond to emergencies or assist in community development work?**

- Yes
- no

If yes, what type of training and who provided the training \_\_\_\_\_

**27. Do you believe volunteers should have legal protections or policies ensuring their rights and safety?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

**28. Have you experienced any personal or family-related challenges as a result of your volunteer work?**

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes
- please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

**29. What are the primary benefits you have experienced as a result of volunteering?**

(Select all that apply)

- Personal growth and development
- Enhanced professional skills or qualifications
- Expanded social networks
- Increased self-esteem and confidence
- Greater understanding of community issues
- Strengthened leadership skills
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**30. What are the most significant opportunities for growth in volunteer work in Sagaing?**

- Increased collaboration between organizations
- Greater public awareness of volunteerism
- More government support and policies for volunteer initiatives
- More training and development programs for volunteers
- Opportunities for youth and women to engage in volunteerism
- Improved volunteer recognition and rewards
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**31. What types of partnerships or collaborations would enhance your volunteer experience and impact?**

- Government agencies
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Community leaders and groups
- International organizations
- Educational institutions
- Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**32. In your experience, what kind of support do you receive from partnerships or collaboration to carry out your volunteer work?**

*(Please select all that apply)*

- Training and capacity-building workshops
- Resource Provision
- Access to tools, equipment, or materials
- Logistical or transportation support
- Technical guidance or expert advice
- Information sharing or communication support
- Coordination and networking with other volunteers or groups
- Moral or psychosocial support
- Recognition or incentives (e.g., certificates, awards)
- No support received from partnerships or collaboration
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**33. How could government and non-governmental institutions/ organization better collaborate with volunteers to promote community resilience? (Please select all that apply)**

- Develop community-based disaster preparedness training programs in partnership with volunteers
- Provide small grants or resources (e.g. emergency kits, tools) to support local volunteer initiatives
- Assign focal persons at township level to coordinate with local volunteer groups
- Involve volunteers in emergency response planning and simulation exercises
- Include volunteer representatives in township or village development committees
- Publicly acknowledge volunteer contributions through events, media, or official recognition
- Organize regular coordination meetings between government, NGOs and volunteers
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**34. Do you think more local people would be willing to volunteer if there were more support and incentives?**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**35. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.**

**(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)**

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
a.	I feel a strong sense of personal fulfilment from my volunteer work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	I am satisfied with the support I receive from the organization or community leaders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.	I have received sufficient training to carry out my volunteer duties.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.	My contributions as a volunteer are recognized and appreciated.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.	I am satisfied with the communication and coordination among volunteers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f.	I feel that my volunteer work contributes meaningfully to community resilience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g.	The workload and responsibilities I have as a volunteer are manageable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h.	I feel motivated to continue volunteering in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i.	I feel a sense of belonging and connection with other volunteers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j.	Overall, I am satisfied with my experience as a community volunteer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**36. What kind of support or improvements would help increase your satisfaction as a volunteer? (Please select all that apply)**

- Comprehensive training and clear guidance on volunteer roles
  - Recognition and appreciation for contributions (e.g., certificates, public acknowledgment)
  - Access to necessary resources and tools to perform duties effectively
  - Provision of stipends or reimbursement for volunteering-related expenses
  - Opportunities for personal growth and skill development
  - Opportunities to connect and socialize with fellow volunteers
  - Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**Section D: Final Reflections and Suggestions**

**37. What does the term “community resilience” mean to you personally?**

**38. How important do you think volunteerism is for the future of Sagaing Township’s development?**

- Very important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not important

**39. How can youth be encouraged to participate in volunteer work?**

*(Please select all that apply)*

- Providing opportunities for skill development and personal growth
- Offering recognition and rewards for volunteer efforts
- Integrating volunteer activities into school curricula or extracurricular programs
- Creating volunteer opportunities that align with youth interests and passions
- Providing mentorship and guidance from experienced volunteers
- Utilizing social media and digital platforms to promote volunteer opportunities
- Organizing group volunteer activities to foster a sense of community
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**40. Would you recommend others to join volunteer activities?**

- Yes
- No

Why or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

**41. If given the chance, would you take a leadership or coordinator role in a volunteer program?**

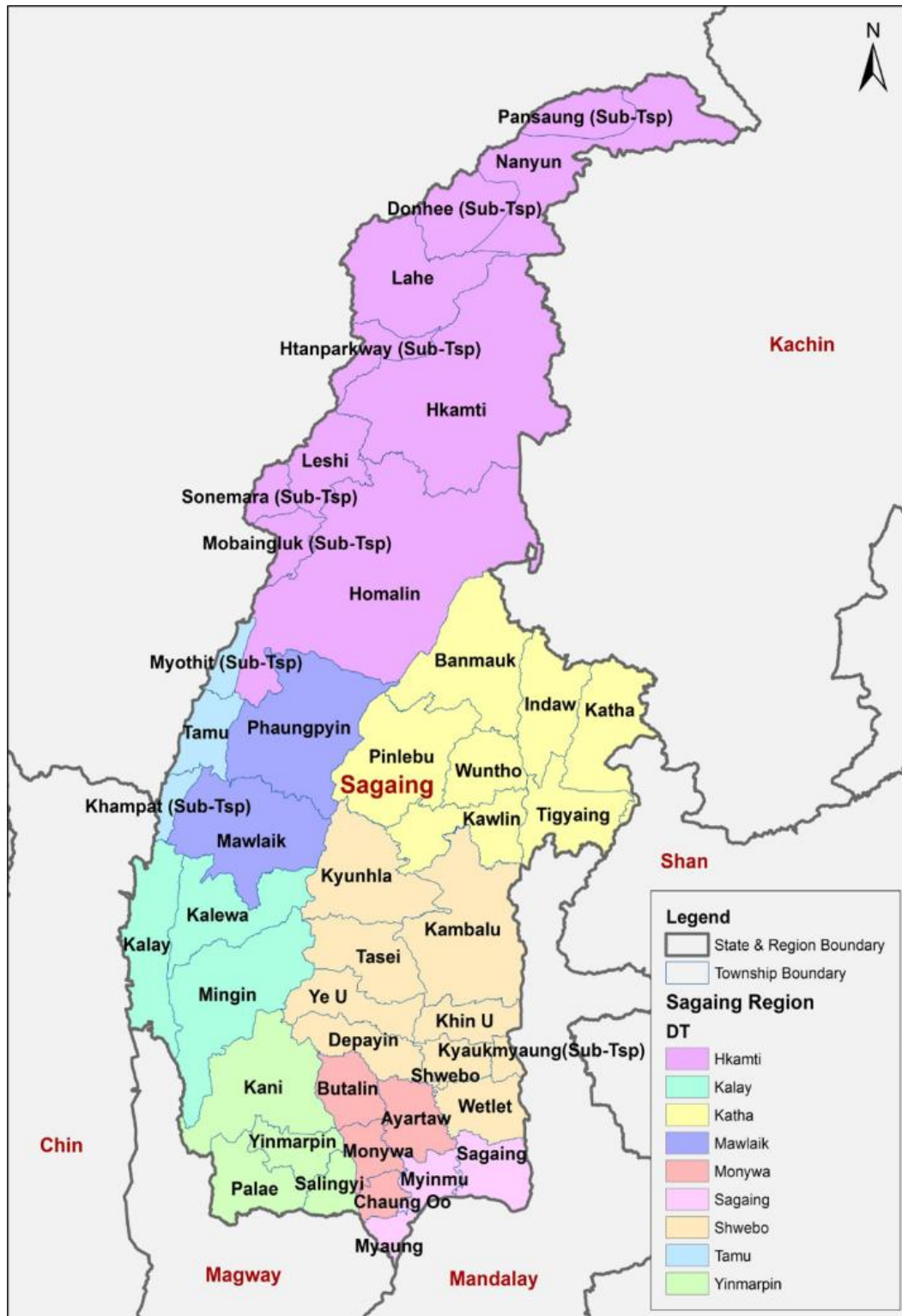
- Yes
- No

Why or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

**42. In your opinion, what are the most important things that need to change to make community volunteerism more effective and sustainable? (Please select all that apply)**

- Fostering partnerships between government, NGOs, and community volunteer groups
  - Implementing monitoring and evaluation systems to assess volunteer impact
  - Encouraging youth involvement through targeted outreach and programs
  - Promoting volunteerism as a means for personal and professional development
  - Providing comprehensive training and capacity-building programs for volunteers
  - Providing stipends or reimbursements for volunteering-related expenses
  - Other (s) \_\_\_\_\_
-

**Figure 1: Map of Sagaing Township**



Source: Census Information on Sagaing Township, Department of Population, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (October 2017)