



Volunteering intentions during social crises: The role of considering the welfare of others and consequences of own behavior

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ABSTRACT

In the current paper, we investigate how people with experience with volunteering in their lifetime intend to engage in hypothetical crisis volunteering in the future. We took into account two types of hypothetical social crises: a pandemic and a refugee crisis. We suggest that individual differences in considering the welfare of others (social value orientation) and consideration of future/immediate consequences play a role in the volunteer responses to crises. We also control for the willingness to volunteer in the proximal (a month) and distal (3 years) future, gender, age, and length of volunteer experience. We conducted two survey-based online studies in October 2023. We recruited $N = 287$ people for Study 1 (Poland) and $N = 231$ for Study 2 (Italy). Our results suggested that people who declare they want to remain volunteers intend to engage during social crises, but not necessarily in a proactive way. Furthermore, consideration of future consequences can result in proactivity, which was especially visible in the Italian sample. Consideration of immediate consequences can have twofold correlates – one might be the engagement in volunteering in case of a sudden emergency or refraining from the voluntary activity. These results can be used by people leading volunteer activities to predict what to expect from their volunteers and plan the volunteer recruitment and retention processes during crises.

1. Introduction

Recently, Europe has been bothered by social crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Rausis & Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik, 2021) and the refugee crises (Crepaz, 2022; Moise et al., 2024). Social crises evoke responses from individuals, some of which – e.g., volunteering to relieve the adverse consequences of crises – are based on solidarity and care (Carlsen et al., 2021). Regardless of the measures suggested by the governments, the response of volunteers has been critical in mitigating the negative impact of the crises (Mao et al., 2021; Milan, 2020). However, even among people with previous experience helping others, the crisis responses might differ.

In the current paper, we explore how people with lifetime volunteering experience intend to engage in future crisis volunteering during two types of hypothetical social crises: a pandemic and a refugee crisis.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many grassroots organizations developed and took over the tasks of non-governmental and public institutions (Carstensen et al., 2021; Milan, 2020). It anticipates the trend towards informal (rather than formal, organization-based) volunteering that has been observed in recent years (Rochester, 2021). Despite both

informal and formal volunteering brings value to the communities and the volunteers themselves, organizations can lose their volunteers in times of crisis. In our study, we aim to explore whether people with volunteering experience intend to seek opportunities outside their known organizations during social crises, and how they think they would react in such times.

We conducted two parallel studies, one in Poland and one in Italy. These are two countries that have experienced the recent critical events in different ways. We wanted to investigate whether the intended reactions depend on the personal factors – consideration of future/immediate consequences (CFC-Future/CFC-Immediate), social value orientation (SVO; based on the social/temporal fences of prosocial engagement; Joireman et al., 2001; Maki et al., 2016; Nowakowska, 2023a; Milfont & Gouveia, 2006) willingness to be a volunteer in general in a month and three years (short and long-time horizon). We also examined whether the pattern of results is similar or different depending on the cultural and political context of the place where the support is provided. We focused on intentions to respond in the event of a new crisis, rather than on responses in the past.

Below, we present the context of our studies, starting from an outline

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of the theoretical frames that enabled us to suggest the potential predictors of voluntary behaviors during crises. Then, we describe the volunteering patterns during crises observed in the last years. Finally, we present an overview of our hypotheses in a subsection describing the current studies.

1.1. Social and temporal fences of prosocial behavior

Volunteering can be considered a prosocial behavior (Piatak & Holt, 2020), and prosocial behaviors are intentional, performed out of free will, and beneficial to others (Penner et al., 2005). A body of research has focused on the role of social and temporal aspects of prosocial behaviors. On the example of pro-environmental behaviors, Milfont and Gouveia (2006) suggested that the decision to undertake them relies on social and temporal considerations. The first pertains to assessing the act to be performed regarding the consequences for one's own versus others' welfare — the latter — to the short- versus long-term consequences of one's own action. People differ in terms of what consequences outweigh their decisions — and thus, measurable individual differences can be linked to the propensity to volunteer in specific ways.

Social value orientation is an individual difference that describes to what extent a person considers others' well-being when making decisions (Murphy et al., 2011). Social value orientation is the level of competitiveness or altruism of a person. In most cases, it is assessed as the propensity to share resources with others, using decomposed games in which people make unilateral decisions about how much to give to others and how much to save for themselves (Murphy & Ackermann, 2014). A recent study by Nowakowska (2023a) has suggested that higher social value orientation is linked to the intention to continue volunteering in the future. It is because a concern for the positive outcomes for others sustains the willingness to devote time and bear personal costs to achieve a goal important to oneself. Presumably, people of higher social value orientation are more inclined to respond to crises proactively, including responses linked to more personal costs.

Also, considering the consequences of one's action or inaction might be necessary when deciding to act prosocial. The awareness of the costs and consequences of one's own actions over time is a "temporal" aspect of prosocial behavior (Joireman et al., 2001; Maki et al., 2016). An individual difference that describes the extent to which people assess the outcomes of their current behaviors and to which these outcomes impact them is the consideration of future consequences (Strathman et al., 1994). Consideration of future consequences is a general term under which there are two constructs: consideration of immediate consequences (CFC-Immediate; regarding the short-term) and consideration of future consequences (CFC-Future; regarding the long-term; Joireman & King, 2016; Strathman et al., 1994). Volunteering is typically based on devoting own short-term welfare to the short- or long-term well-being of others (Maki et al., 2016). It thus involves awareness of both future proximal and distal consequences of one's behavior. Empirical data support the usefulness of considering future consequences in understanding prosocial behavior. However, not all of the data relate specifically to the consideration of future consequences (some are based on the measurement of similar constructs, e.g. future and present perspectives). For example, future orientation has been found in research to facilitate student engagement in extracurricular activities (including volunteering; Greenbank, 2014). It was also positively related to the intention to volunteer among people with low social value orientation (individualists; Nowakowska, 2023a). Present considerations may also be important for prosocial behavior. In a study by Maki et al. (2016), both future and present hedonistic orientations predicted motivation to volunteer and engage in further activities. Data from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic showed that current hedonistic orientation and previous experience of volunteering predicted donating items to people in need, which was an immediate response to the crisis (Nowakowska, 2023b).

1.2. Volunteering during social crisis

For the COVID-19 pandemic, European Union member states adopted similar mitigation strategies to prevent the spread of the virus and protect their economies from severe recession, including closing borders, significantly restricting the mobility of citizens, purchasing medical equipment and other supplies, allocating money for research into COVID-19, and providing financial support to businesses (Goniewicz et al., 2020). Restrictions had an impact on everyday social life and challenged the status quo, even for volunteers (Knieć et al., 2023). During an initial COVID-19 lockdown introduced in early 2020 in Europe, it was clear that new strategies were needed to support health services, professionals, and volunteer organizations (Fumagalli et al., 2023; Jarynowski et al., 2020). Many charity and volunteering-related initiatives concentrated on helping seniors were established to help them function in lockdown (Morawski & Szczegieliński, 2021). Numerous grassroots online activities emerged as options for informal volunteering, especially for vulnerable populations or people put under quarantine (Jarynowski et al., 2020). Non-governmental organizations have broadened their scope to meet emerging needs, cooperation networks have expanded accordingly, and grassroots self-help activities have emerged as a response to the crisis (Knieć et al., 2023). In addition, health volunteers played a crucial role in managing the pandemic emergency and meeting the new needs of people suffering from other diseases (e.g. cancer) by providing emotional and practical support to patients and their families (Alfieri et al., 2023).

COVID-19 was not the only crisis to affect the world of volunteering. Another example is the refugee crisis. It has been present in Europe regularly (especially in the Mediterranean area) since at least the late 1980s (Baldwin-Edwards, 2006). In countries such as Italy, it led to the creation of numerous initiatives, teams of experts and a system of health protection for migrants and foreign citizens, involving public and non-governmental institutions and voluntary associations (Camoni et al., 2000). Various community volunteer programs were developed to promote the inclusion of migrants in the host country, especially in schools, with the help of volunteer organizations (Trunk et al., 2019). Several authors highlighted the importance of NGOs, mainly in the first phase of settlement, providing services in organized forms, often compensating for the closure of public institutions. Usually, NGOs work for migrants with special needs for a structured supply (language, health care, food, and paperwork; Ambrosini, 2017).

A lack of compassionate systemic reactions may result in citizen frustration, which leads to voluntary humanitarian responses. It can include people previously engaged and novel, spontaneous volunteers (Domaradzki et al., 2022). The recent refugee crisis related to the conflict in Ukraine proved that the prosocial response may reveal itself in donating items, food, and money, organizing charity events, engaging in information, administrative, and legal support, providing accommodation to the refugees, forming a large wave of social support, often self-organized (Byrska, 2023; Lipiec-Karwowska, 2023).

Typically, social crises bring new challenges and opportunities to volunteers. The broadening scope of operations of nongovernmental organizations results in a call for help. Emergent self-help groups also provide informal support, requiring keen individual participation. Some active volunteers, however, decide to refrain from engaging at the crisis occasion. How can we characterize volunteers who tend to react in particular ways, understanding that their response to the crisis may rely on considering the welfare of others and the consequences of their actions over time? In the current study, we intend to contribute to the discourse by conducting studies in two countries differently affected by the recent crises.

1.3. Current study

In the current paper, we investigated why people with experience with volunteering intend to engage in crisis volunteering (and how)

during two types of hypothetical social crises: a pandemic and a refugee crisis. Based on observations from the literature on the typical reactions of volunteers to a social crisis (Byrska, 2023; Knieć et al., 2023; Nowakowska, 2021), we wanted to check how likely they are to react in five ways: (1) by initiating/organizing help within the organization they knew and with which they cooperated as a volunteer (agentic, most proactive response, relying on taking responsibility within a known entity); (2) by waiting for the organization they knew and with which they cooperated as a volunteer to suggest new ways of help and then engaging in them (passive response, however relying on remaining within a known entity); (3) by looking for organization other than they knew, which offered formalized help for people affected by the situation and engage as a volunteer (agentic response, but with no own initiative, and relying on an unknown entity); (4) by looking for informal, local groups and offering their help there (agentic response relying on informal help networks); (5) by refraining from any volunteer activity regarding a specific situation (avoidant response).

We conducted two parallel studies, one in Poland and one in Italy. Italy was considered a source of the variant of COVID-19, and information on the situation in the North, especially in Bergamo, spread across the world as an example of the pandemic consequences (Senni, 2020). Therefore, compared to Poland, Italy bore the stigma of being a country responsible for the situation in the region.

For the refugee crisis, Italy has been an arrival country for many people fleeing wars or seeking employment and new life in Europe. During the 2015 crisis, the country was severely affected, as refugees and migrants were reaching Lampedusa and other Italian coasts; some of them did not survive. Moreover, Italy contributed to meeting the needs of refugees from Ukraine, showing solidarity with other European countries in this matter.

Poland, on the contrary, has a very short history of accepting refugees and migrants. In 2015, when the large refugee crisis escalated in Europe, Poland responded by not expressing solidarity with other countries and banning refugees from crossing its borders, which resulted in reprimands obtained from the European Union (Goździak & Main, 2020; Narkowicz, 2018). Only in 2021, Poland was surprised by a flood of refugees, mainly Syrian, Iraqi, Afghan, and others originating mainly from the Middle East and Africa, who began crossing the border between Poland and Belarus as a result of hybrid operations coordinated by Russia (Tomczak-Boczko et al., 2023). The aid provided to these people was basically only on the shoulders of nongovernmental organizations, which were supported by volunteers (Byrska, 2023). In the climate of anti-immigrant atmosphere, Poland only in 2022 experienced the first significant wave of refugees, becoming the leading hosting country for refugees fleeing Ukraine as a result of its war with Russia (Domaradzki et al., 2022; Lipiec-Karwowska, 2023).

Therefore, we observe similarities and differences between the context of experiencing social crises in Poland and Italy. Given that strong social situations can alter how individual differences shape human reactions (Mischel, 1977), we intended to check whether the intentions to volunteer in agentic, passive, or avoidant ways relate to individual differences in the same way.

Based on the available literature, we posed hypotheses to be tested. First, as agentic volunteering responses require bearing personal costs, and individualistic attitude encourages caring for one's own welfare and avoidance of bearing costs in social interactions (Murphy et al., 2011; Nowakowska, 2023a):

H1. Social value orientation is positively related to intention for agentic volunteer responses and negatively to intention for passive and avoidant responses (as an individualistic attitude encourages care for one's own welfare and avoidance of bearing costs in social interactions).

Future orientation is related to the ability to envisage the future in the long term, the capacity to plan, and to be ready to wait for the fruit of own work (Maki et al., 2016). That is why we hypothesize that:

H2. Consideration of future consequences is related to the intention for agentic volunteer responses to crises.

Consideration of immediate consequences describes how a person thinks about short-term outcomes. The impact of this individual difference can be twofold. On the one hand, a person can be inclined to act to relieve the immediate adverse consequences of an emergency but also focus on the short-term costs to be borne and avoid action. That is why we suppose that:

H3. Consideration of immediate consequences is related to the intention for agentic volunteer responses to crises and refraining from action in response to crises.

We intended to control whether the hypothesized effects exist when controlling for the general (not crisis-related) intention to be a volunteer in the future (given that we were surveying people who were not necessarily active volunteers). We took into account two time horizons for being active: a month (short time horizon) and three years (long time horizon), hypothesizing that:

H4. Intention to remain active both in the short and long term is related positively to intentions for active and passive volunteer response during crises and negatively to refraining from action during crises.

We checked non-hypothesized relationships between consideration of future/immediate consequences and intention for volunteering responses for exploratory purposes.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Two hundred eighty-seven people from Poland and 131 people from Italy with experience with volunteering at least once in their lifetime participated in Study 1 and 2, respectively. Data about the demographic characteristics and volunteering experiences of Study 1 and 2 participants are presented in Table 1.

2.2. Procedure

The procedure was the same for Study 1 and Study 2. They were conducted simultaneously in October 2023. For both countries, 2023 was a year free of COVID-19 lockdowns. Moreover, the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022 resulted in an influx of refugees to both Poland and Italy, encouraging social support mobilization in the year preceding the study (Bolzoni et al., 2023; Byrska, 2023). We did our studies with the assistance of two different research panels operating in Poland and Italy, respectively, both complying to the ESOMAR standards. Out of the registered panel users we recruited people who declared having experience in formal or informal volunteering in various organizations at least once in their lifetime. We performed the whole procedure online.

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, which was presented as "the exploration of the willingness to help others, volunteering experiences, and ways of perceiving oneself and the world." Before filling out the surveys, participants were presented with a definition of volunteering and were asked to tick whether they had a formal or informal volunteering experience in their lifetime. According to classic definitions, volunteering does not include everyday help provided to family or friends (Wilson, 2000), so we excluded this type of support in our introductory definition of volunteering presented to participants. Given our focus on hypothetical responses to the crisis in terms of the organizations with which volunteers work, we wanted to recruit people with experience of volunteering under the auspices of formal (formalized, registered) organizations or informal (grassroots, unregistered) groups. The definition was as follows: *Under the term "volunteering," we understand non-paid work undertaken in formal and*

Table 1

Volunteering experiences of participants of Studies 1 and 2.

Variable	Value	Study 1	Study 2
Gender	Female	147 (51.2 %)	117 (50.6 %)
	Male	139 (48.4 %)	112 (48.5 %)
	Other/prefer not to disclose	1 (0.3 %)	2 (0.9 %)
Age		18–61; $M = 34.98$; $SD = 9.67$	18–66; $M = 38.79$; $SD = 10.42$
Place of residence size	Village	75 (26.1 %)	67 (29.0 %)
	Town with <100,000 inhabitants	89 (31.0 %)	80 (34.6 %)
	Town with 100,001–499,999 inhabitants	67 (23.3 %)	35 (15.2 %)
	Town with over 500,000 inhabitants	56 (19.5 %)	49 (21.2 %)
Last finished education level	Primary or secondary	2 (0.7 %)	11 (4.8 %)
	Vocational school (Study 1)/Professional institute (Study 2)	14 (4.9 %)	9 (3.9 %)
	High school	104 (36.2 %)	100 (43.3 %)
	Bachelor's degree	47 (16.4 %)	49 (21.2 %)
	Master's degree	115 (40.1 %)	59 (25.5 %)
	Ph. D. degree or higher academic title	4 (1.4 %)	0 (0.0 %)
	Other	1 (0.3 %)	3 (1.3 %)
Volunteering mode (more than one answer allowed)	Formal in a non-governmental organization	70 (24.4 %)	88 (38.1 %)
	Formal in an organization funded publicly	46 (16.0 %)	29 (12.6 %)
	Informal (in a self-help group, neighborhood organization)	192 (66.9 %)	95 (41.1 %)
	Other	8 (2.8 %)	22 (9.5 %)
Frequency of volunteering in the last year	Once or twice a year	104 (36.2 %)	78 (33.8 %)
	Several times a year	86 (30.0 %)	48 (20.8 %)
	Once a month	30 (10.5 %)	43 (18.6 %)
	2–3 times a month	40 (13.9 %)	25 (10.8 %)
	Once a week	15 (5.2 %)	24 (10.4 %)
	More than once a week	12 (4.2 %)	13 (5.6 %)
Length of experience with volunteering (in years)*		$M = 5.20$; $SD = 4.60$; range 0–30	$M = 5.98$; $SD = 5.99$; range 0–37
Volunteering theme (more than one answer allowed)	Working with children	99 (34.5 %)	57 (24.7 %)
	Working with seniors	72 (25.1 %)	42 (18.2 %)
	Working with people with disabilities	49 (17.1 %)	35 (15.2 %)
	Education	43 (15.0 %)	19 (8.2 %)
	Fundraising	11 (3.8 %)	29 (12.6 %)
	Office work at an organization	15 (5.2 %)	19 (8.2 %)
	Working with animals	69 (24.0 %)	30 (13.0 %)
	Scouting	12 (4.2 %)	8 (3.5 %)
	Voluntary firefighting	9 (3.1 %)	4 (1.7 %)
	Pandemic-related volunteering	35 (12.2 %)	14 (6.1 %)
	Working with refugees	32 (11.1 %)	5 (2.2 %)
	Organizing events	43 (15.0 %)	30 (13.0 %)
	Other	12 (4.2 %)	24 (10.4 %)

* Participants who indicated participation in volunteering for less than a year had this variable coded with "0". For volunteering mode, the percentages do not sum to 100 % as multiple answers were allowed.

informal actions, such as social, charity actions, or work in a formal or informal organization – non-governmental organization, foundation, self-help group, church organization, school, museum, hospital, and other places. Support provided to family or friends IS NOT volunteering in the sense of

this definition. Unpaid internships are also not volunteering. Additionally, in the further part of the survey, participants were asked to briefly describe their involvement as volunteers and provide details so that we could check whether they fit the recruitment prerequisites.

The participants filled out a set of self-report questionnaires. Both studies were anonymous, and there were no consequences for discontinuing them.

In random places in the questionnaire, we put three attention check questions, stating: *This question checks your attention. Mark < an option >*. Only people who responded correctly to all attention checks were considered in further analyses.

Participants who completed the surveys were remunerated with points later exchangeable for rewards. We obtained ethical approval from The Maria Grzegorzewska University of the procedure and materials prior to conduction. The study conformed to the Declaration of Helsinki (2001). All participants provided informed consent.

2.3. Measures

We used parallel measures for Study 1 and 2.

Social value orientation was measured with Social Value Orientation Slider Measure version A (SVO Slider; [Murphy & Ackermann, 2014](#)). For Studies 1 and 2, we used the Polish and Italian versions shared by [Dorrough et al. \(2018\)](#) at <https://osf.io/7ybnbs/>. SVO Slider is an instrument that is based on a game. Participants are asked to choose the division of fictitious resources (described as points) between themselves and another (fictitious) game partner. There are 6 items and 9 options for the division of resources in each. The general score of social value orientation is computed based on an algorithm by Baumgartner (n/d), which is available from the Ryan O'Murphy website <http://ryanomurphy.com/styled-2/downloads/index.html>. The score ranges from –16.26 (meaning an utterly competitive social value orientation) to 61.39 (meaning an utterly altruistic social value orientation). Based on cutoff points, categorically describing each participant as competitive, individualistic, prosocial, or altruistic is also possible.

Consideration of Future Consequences was measured using the Consideration of Future Consequences-14 Scale (CFC-14; [Joireman et al., 2012](#)). For Study 1, we used the Polish adaptation by [Frydrysiak \(2018\)](#), and for Study 2 – the Italian adaptation by [Nigro et al. \(2016\)](#). CFC-14 is a self-report, 14-item scale consisting of two subscales, Future and Immediate, measuring how participants consider their behaviors' immediate or long-term consequences while deciding to undertake them. Responses are provided on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (extremely uncharacteristic of me) to 7 (extremely characteristic of me). The general scores for each subscale were calculated as means of the relevant items. Sample items are: *I consider how things might be in the future and try to influence those things with my day to day behavior* (Future subscale), *My behavior is only influenced by the immediate (i.e., a matter of days or weeks) outcomes of my actions* (Immediate subscale). Cronbach's α in Study 1 was 0.78 for the Future subscale, 0.80 for the Immediate subscale; for Study 2, 0.84 for the Future subscale and 0.90 for the Immediate subscale.

Declared reactions to the crisis were assessed with a survey of the construction of the current study's authors for this project. Based on observations of the nongovernmental organizations, online-based self-help groups and volunteers' functioning in both countries, as well as the typical reactions of volunteers to social crises described in the literature (see a paper on volunteers' perceptions on that matter based on interviews with Polish volunteers during the pandemic; [Nowakowska, 2021](#)), we identified five possible volunteer reactions to the crisis. Through series of discussions within the team and consultations with other scholars and practitioners beyond it, we worded them as following: (1) initiating or organizing help within the organization a volunteer knows and with which they cooperated; (2) waiting for the organization a volunteer knows and with which they cooperated to suggest new ways of help and then engage in it; (3) looking for an

organization other than a volunteer knows which offers formalized help for people affected by the situation and engage as a volunteer; (4) looking for informal, local groups and offer their help there; (5) refraining from any volunteering activity related to the crisis.

We asked how likely it would be (in percentage 0–100 %) for the participants to react with these five behaviors (each of them was rated separately) in two cases. Again, the descriptions of the scenarios were based on the literature regarding the COVID-19 pandemic at its beginning (e.g., Jarynowski et al., 2020; Nowakowska, 2020; Nowakowska, 2023b; Rinaldi & Bottani, 2023) and the refugee crises (Bolzoni et al., 2023; Byrska, 2023; Ceccorulli, 2023; Lee et al., 2023). Through discussions within the team and consultations with other scholars and practitioners, we decided to word the scenarios as such: (1) *Imagine a new serious wave of a pandemic. Many people are quarantined, and there are people especially vulnerable to the consequences of the disease. Getting infected can mean death for them. Some people lose their jobs and are short of money. Groups of infected and vulnerable people are legally obliged to stay home and need support in everyday activities, such as shopping, taking out trash, walking animals, etc. How likely is it for you to...;* and (2) *Imagine that a new wave of refugees is approaching your country. The refugees are fleeing from war in their country of origin. There are no regulations regarding their stay in your country. You know that most of them do not know your language, do not know where to go, and need essential support to find themselves in a new situation. How likely is it for you to...*

Each item was taken separately as a dependent variable in our models. An analytic strategy of taking percentage variables as dependent variables in the context of propensity to volunteer was used previously in research, e.g., Nowakowska (2023a).

2.4. Analytic strategy

First, we performed correlation analysis for both studies to gain insight into the relationships between the variables (the results are presented in Supplementary File Table S1). Next, the hypotheses were tested using linear regression models (results presented below). All analyses were performed with IBM SPSS 29.0.0.0.

2.5. Open data

Data is openly available at Open Science Framework <https://osf.io/934w5/>.

3. Results

3.1. Study 1

We present the results of linear regression analysis predicting the likelihood of acting in various ways during a hypothetical pandemic in Table 2.

As shown in Table 2, among Poles, during a hypothetical pandemic, the likelihood of initiating/organizing help within the organization a volunteer knew and with which they cooperated was predicted by CFC-Future, $\beta = 0.12$; $p < .05$; declared probability of volunteering in a month, $\beta = 0.36$, $p < .001$, and declared probability of volunteering in 3 years, $\beta = 0.33$; $p < .001$. The model accounted for 41.4 % of the variance of the dependent variable.

The likelihood of waiting for the organization the volunteer knew and with which they cooperated to suggest new ways of help and then engaging in them was predicted by the declared probability of volunteering in a month, $\beta = 0.38$, $p < .001$, and declared probability of volunteering in 3 years, $\beta = 0.21$; $p < .001$. The model accounted for 31.5 % of the variance of the dependent variable.

The likelihood of looking for an organization other than the volunteer knew, which offers formalized help for people affected by the situation and engaging as a volunteer was predicted by CFC-Immediate, $\beta = 0.19$; $p < .001$, declared probability of volunteering in a month, $\beta =$

Table 2
Results of linear regression analysis predicting the likelihood to act in various ways during a pandemic in Study 1 (Poland).

Predictors	Dependent variable: How likely is it for you to react by...												VIF						
	Initiating/organizing help within the organization you know and with which you cooperated as a volunteer				Waiting for the organization you know and with which you cooperated as a volunteer to suggest new ways of help, and then you engage in them.				Looking for an organization other than you know, which offers formalized help for people affected by the situation and engage as a volunteer										
	β	t	p		β	t	p		β	t	p								
SVO	0.06	1.35	0.178		0.02	0.46	0.646		0.05	0.95	0.341		0.06	1.16	0.248	-0.15	-2.63	0.009	1.05
CFC-Future	0.12	2.36	0.019		0.08	1.60	0.111		0.06	1.00	0.318		0.03	0.58	0.563	0.04	0.71	0.482	1.14
CFC-Immediate	0.10	2.16	0.031		0.06	1.18	0.239		0.19	3.40	<0.001		0.12	2.28	0.023	0.31	5.25	<0.001	1.13
Declared probability of volunteer engagement in a month	0.36	6.53	<0.001		0.38	6.29	<0.001		0.19	2.99	0.003		0.19	3.19	0.002	-0.02	-0.27	0.790	1.51
Declared probability of volunteer engagement in three years	0.33	5.70	<0.001		0.21	3.42	<0.001		0.31	4.80	<0.001		0.39	6.18	<0.001	0.05	0.75	0.456	1.61
Gender (0 = female, 1 = male)	-0.01	-0.16	0.870		-0.07	-1.49	0.139		0.02	0.36	0.721		-0.01	-0.20	0.845	0.05	0.92	0.358	1.05
Age	0.03	0.71	0.476		-0.04	-0.81	0.421		-0.09	-1.57	0.118		0.07	1.32	0.187	-0.04	-0.68	0.497	1.13
Length of volunteering experience (experience shorter than 1 year coded as 0)	-0.09	-1.74	0.083		0.05	0.85	0.396		0.04	0.72	0.475		-0.02	-0.36	0.723	-0.14	-2.24	0.026	1.21
F(8; 277)	26.12				23.49				12.66				16.08			6.49			
p	<0.001				<0.001				<0.001				<0.001			<0.001			
R ²	0.414				0.315				0.247				0.297			0.134			

0.19, $p < .01$, and declared probability of volunteering in 3 years, $\beta = 0.31$; $p < .001$. The model accounted for 24.7 % of the variance of the dependent variable.

The likelihood of looking for informal, local groups and offering their help there was predicted by CFC-Immediate, $\beta = 0.12$; $p < .05$, declared probability of volunteering in a month, $\beta = 0.19$, $p < .01$, and declared probability of volunteering in 3 years, $\beta = 0.39$; $p < .001$. The model accounted for 29.7 % of the variance of the dependent variable.

The likelihood of refraining from any volunteer activity was predicted by low SVO, $\beta = -0.15$; $p < .01$; CFC-Immediate, $\beta = 0.31$; $p < .001$; and shorter experience with volunteering, $\beta = -0.14$; $p < .05$. The model accounted for 13.4 % of the variance of the dependent variable.

We present the results of linear regression analysis predicting the likelihood of acting in various ways during a hypothetical refugee crisis in Poland in Table 3.

As shown in Table 3, among Poles, during a hypothetical refugee crisis, the likelihood of initiating/organizing help within the organization a volunteer knew and with which they cooperated was predicted by CFC-Immediate, $\beta = 0.21$; $p < .001$; declared probability of volunteering in a month, $\beta = 0.30$, $p < .001$, and declared probability of volunteering in 3 years, $\beta = 0.21$; $p < .01$. The model accounted for 22.4 % of variance of the dependent variable.

The likelihood of waiting for the organization the volunteer knew and with which they cooperated to suggest new ways of help and then engaging in them was predicted by the declared probability of volunteering in a month, $\beta = 0.36$, $p < .001$. The model accounted for 23.0 % of the variance of the dependent variable.

The likelihood of looking for an organization other than the volunteer knew, which offers formalized help for people affected by the situation and engaging as a volunteer was predicted by CFC-Immediate, $\beta = 0.17$; $p < .01$, declared probability of volunteering in a month, $\beta = 0.19$, $p < .01$, and declared probability of volunteering in 3 years, $\beta = 0.29$; $p < .001$. The model accounted for 19.8 % of the variance of the dependent variable.

The likelihood of looking for informal, local groups and offering their help there was predicted by CFC-Immediate, $\beta = 0.19$; $p < .001$, declared probability of volunteering in a month, $\beta = 0.17$, $p < .05$, and declared probability of volunteering in 3 years, $\beta = 0.29$; $p < .001$. The model accounted for 20.5 % of the variance of the dependent variable.

The likelihood of refraining from any volunteer activity was predicted by low SVO, $\beta = -0.12$; $p < .05$, CFC-Immediate, $\beta = 0.12$; $p < .05$, low declared predicted probability of volunteering in a month, $\beta = -0.19$; $p < .01$, and shorter volunteering experience, $\beta = -0.14$; $p < .05$. The model accounted for 6.6 % of the variance of the dependent variable.

3.2. Study 2

We present the results of linear regression analysis predicting the likelihood of acting in various ways during a hypothetical pandemic in Italy in Table 4.

As shown in Table 4, among Italians, during a hypothetical pandemic, the likelihood of initiating/organizing help within the organization a volunteer knew and with which they cooperated was predicted by CFC-Immediate, $\beta = 0.14$; $p < .05$; declared probability of volunteering in a month, $\beta = 0.54$, $p < .001$, and declared probability of volunteering in 3 years, $\beta = 0.18$; $p < .01$. The model accounted for 45.0 % of variance of the dependent variable.

The likelihood of waiting for the organization the volunteer knew and with which they cooperated to suggest new ways of help and then engaging in them was predicted by the declared probability of volunteering in a month, $\beta = 0.46$, $p < .001$, and declared probability of volunteering in 3 years, $\beta = 0.19$; $p < .01$. The model accounted for 37.6 % of the variance of the dependent variable.

The likelihood of looking for an organization other than the volunteer knew, which offers formalized help for people affected by the

Table 3
Results of linear regression analysis predicting the likelihood to act in various ways during a refugee crisis in Study 1 (Poland).

Predictors	Dependent variable: How likely is it for you to react by...												VIF
	Initiating/organizing help within the organization you know and with which you cooperated as a volunteer				Waiting for the organization you know and with which you cooperated as a volunteer to suggest new ways of help, and then you engage in them				Looking for an organization other than you know, which offers formalized help for people affected by the situation and engage as a volunteer				
	β	t	p		β	t	p		β	t	p		
SVO	0.03	0.56	0.573		0.05	0.89	0.372		0.03	0.62	0.535		1.05
CFC-Future	0.03	0.50	0.617		0.10	1.75	0.081		0.02	0.34	0.737		1.14
CFC-Immediate	0.21	3.78	<0.001		0.06	1.12	0.264		0.17	2.99	0.003		1.13
Predicted probability of volunteer engagement in a month	0.30	4.71	<0.001		0.36	5.60	<0.001		0.19	2.98	0.003		1.51
Predicted probability of volunteer engagement in three years	0.21	3.11	0.002		0.13	1.95	0.053		0.29	4.24	<0.001		1.61
Gender (0 = female, 1 = male)	0.06	1.06	0.291		0.07	1.30	0.195		0.09	1.71	0.088		1.05
Age	-0.04	-0.74	0.461		-0.07	-1.34	0.180		-0.05	-0.90	0.371		1.13
Length of volunteering experience (experience shorter than 1 year coded as 0)	-0.07	-1.21	0.228		0.05	0.92	0.357		-0.01	-0.19	0.847		1.21
$F(8; 277)$	11.29				11.61				9.77				3.51
p	<0.001				<0.001				<0.001				<0.001
R^2	0.224				0.230				0.198				0.066

Table 4
Results of linear regression analysis predicting the likelihood to act in various ways during a pandemic in Study 2 (Italy).

Predictors	Dependent variable: How likely is it for you to react by...												VIF			
	Initiating/organizing help within the organization you know and with which you cooperated as a volunteer			Waiting for the organization you know and with which you cooperated as a volunteer to suggest new ways of help, and then you engage in them			Looking for an organization other than you know, which offers formalized help for people affected by the situation and engage as a volunteer			Looking for informal, local groups and offer your help there				Refraining from any volunteer activity regarding this situation		
	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>		β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
SVO	0.03	0.66	0.509	-0.00	-0.05	0.963	-0.01	-0.12	0.906	0.03	0.45	0.651	-0.07	-1.01	0.313	1.09
CFC-Future	0.01	0.10	0.923	0.06	1.06	0.291	0.15	2.58	0.010	0.19	3.29	0.001	-0.03	-0.48	0.632	1.21
CFC-Immediate	0.14	2.58	0.011	0.09	1.60	0.110	0.10	1.66	0.099	0.06	1.00	0.317	0.33	4.99	<0.001	1.13
Predicted probability of volunteer engagement in a month	0.54	8.32	<0.001	0.46	6.55	<0.001	0.20	2.72	0.007	0.25	3.59	<0.001	0.13	1.57	0.118	1.77
Predicted probability of volunteer engagement in three years	0.18	2.73	0.007	0.19	2.72	0.007	0.36	4.92	<0.001	0.31	4.30	<0.001	0.04	0.49	0.628	1.79
Gender (0 = female, 1 = male)	0.05	0.99	0.324	0.06	1.07	0.285	-0.04	-0.70	0.486	-0.05	-0.89	0.372	-0.04	-0.59	0.558	1.12
Age	-0.05	-0.89	0.376	0.02	0.34	0.732	-0.13	-2.31	0.022	-0.10	-1.73	0.085	-0.04	-0.60	0.546	1.11
Length of volunteering experience (experience shorter than 1 year coded as 0)	-0.01	-0.10	0.925	0.04	0.76	0.447	0.03	0.60	0.553	0.04	0.71	0.477	0.12	1.86	0.064	1.14
<i>F</i> (8; 219)	24.25			18.08			15.39			16.85			5.11			
<i>p</i>	<0.001			<0.001			<0.001			<0.001			<0.001			
<i>R</i> _{adj} ²	0.450			0.376			0.336			0.358			0.127			

situation and engaging as a volunteer was predicted by CFC-Future, $\beta = 0.15$; $p < .05$, declared probability of volunteering in a month, $\beta = 0.20$, $p < .01$, and declared probability of volunteering in 3 years, $\beta = 0.36$; $p < .001$, and younger age, $\beta = -0.13$; $p < .05$. The model accounted for 33.6 % of the variance of the dependent variable.

The likelihood of looking for informal, local groups and offering their help there was predicted by CFC-Future, $\beta = 0.19$; $p < .01$, declared probability of volunteering in a month, $\beta = 0.25$, $p < .001$, and declared probability of volunteering in 3 years, $\beta = 0.31$; $p < .001$. The model accounted for 35.8 % of the variance of the dependent variable.

The likelihood of refraining from any volunteer activity was predicted by CFC-Immediate, $\beta = 0.33$; $p < .001$. The model accounted for 12.7 % of the variance of the dependent variable.

We present the results of linear regression analysis predicting the likelihood of acting in various ways during a hypothetical refugee crisis in Italy in [Table 5](#).

As shown in Table 5, among Italians, during a hypothetical refugee crisis, the likelihood of initiating/organizing help within the organization a volunteer knew and with which they cooperated was predicted by CFC-Future, $\beta = 0.13$; $p < .01$; CFC-Immediate, $\beta = 0.19$; $p < .001$; declared probability of volunteering in a month, $\beta = 0.39$, $p < .001$, and declared probability of volunteering in 3 years, $\beta = 0.17$; $p < .05$. The model accounted for 35.6 % of variance of the dependent variable.

The likelihood of waiting for the organization the volunteer knew and with which they cooperated to suggest new ways of help and then engaging in them was predicted by low SVO, $\beta = -0.14, p < .05$, CFC-Future, $\beta = 0.17, p < .01$, CFC-Immediate, $\beta = 0.12, p < .05$, declared probability of volunteering in a month, $\beta = 0.29, p < .001$, and declared probability of volunteering in 3 years, $\beta = 0.22; p < .01$. The model accounted for 32.3 % of variance of the dependent variable.

The likelihood of looking for organization other than the volunteer knew, which offers formalized help for people affected by the situation and engaging as a volunteer was predicted by low SVO, $\beta = -0.12$; $p < .05$; CFC-Immediate, $\beta = 0.20$; $p < .001$, declared probability of volunteering in a month, $\beta = 0.26$, $p < .001$, declared probability of volunteering in 3 years, $\beta = 0.24$; $p < .01$, and younger age, $\beta = -0.16$, $p < .01$. The model accounted for 31.9 % of variance of the dependent variable.

The likelihood of looking for informal, local groups and offering their help there was predicted by CFC-Future, $\beta = 0.15$; $p < .01$, CFC-Immediate, $\beta = 0.17$; $p < .05$, declared probability of volunteering in a month, $\beta = 0.28$, $p < .001$, and declared probability of volunteering in 3 years, $\beta = 0.18$; $p < .05$. The model accounted for 27.1 % of variance of the dependent variable.

The likelihood of refraining from any volunteer activity was predicted by CFC-Immediate, $\beta = 0.31$; $p < .001$, and longer experience with volunteering, $\beta = 0.13$; $p < .05$. The model accounted for 15.0 % of the variance of the dependent variable.

4. Discussion

Consistently for both countries, and both imagined crises, intention to volunteer in a month and three years predicted all agentic responses (initiating help within one's organization, searching for other organization that offers formalized help or informal local groups and provide support), as well as passive responses (waiting for an organization to suggest ways to help and provide support then). The observed patterns may be related to a generalized motivation to engage in this activity, which allows one to realise one's goals through volunteering (Maki et al., 2016), volunteer role identity, which makes volunteering a part of one's self (Grube & Piliavin, 2000), and satisfaction with the service (Cho et al., 2020). The only exception were the Poles' declarations in the case of a refugee crisis about waiting for own organization to suggest ways to help. In this case, intentions to volunteer in a month, but not three years, were a positive predictor. It might be due to the social support mobilization which occurred in Poland as a response to the war

Table 5
Results of linear regression analysis predicting the likelihood to act in various ways during a refugee crisis in Study 2 (Italy).

Predictors	Dependent variable: How likely is it for you to react by...												VIF			
	Initiating/organizing help within the organization you know and with which you cooperated as a volunteer			Waiting for the organization you know and with which you cooperated as a volunteer to suggest new ways of help, and then you engage in them			Looking for an organization other than you know, which offers formalized help for people affected by the situation and engage as a volunteer			Looking for informal, local groups and offer your help there				Refraining from any volunteer activity regarding this situation		
	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>		β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
SVO	-0.06	-1.09	0.277	-0.14	-2.46	0.015	-0.12	-2.11	0.036	-0.11	-1.79	0.074	-0.09	-1.35	0.180	1.09
CFC-Future	0.13	2.26	0.025	0.17	2.86	0.005	0.12	1.97	0.050	0.15	2.38	0.018	-0.10	-1.50	0.136	1.21
CFC-Immediate	0.19	3.35	<0.001	0.12	2.12	0.035	0.20	3.46	<0.001	0.17	2.86	0.005	0.31	4.74	<0.001	1.13
Predicted probability of volunteer engagement in a month	0.39	5.56	<0.001	0.29	4.03	<0.001	0.26	3.58	<0.001	0.28	3.72	<0.001	0.12	1.48	0.140	1.77
Predicted probability of volunteer engagement in three years	0.17	2.36	0.019	0.22	3.01	0.003	0.24	3.23	0.001	0.18	2.32	0.021	0.14	1.74	0.083	1.79
Gender (0 = female, 1 = male)	-0.01	-0.26	0.798	0.05	0.86	0.390	-0.02	-0.38	0.707	-0.10	-1.72	0.087	-0.08	-1.17	0.243	1.12
Age	-0.09	-1.59	0.112	-0.08	-1.36	0.176	-0.16	-2.77	0.006	-0.09	-1.52	0.130	-0.11	-1.77	0.078	1.11
Length of volunteering experience (experience shorter than 1 year coded as 0)	0.04	0.62	0.535	0.07	1.14	0.257	0.06	0.96	0.340	-0.01	-0.14	0.892	0.13	2.03	0.044	1.14
<i>F</i> (8; 219)	16.71			14.53			14.30			11.57			5.99			
<i>p</i>	<0.001			<0.001			<0.001			<0.001			<0.001			
<i>R</i> ² _{adj}	0.356			0.323			0.319			0.271			0.150			

in Ukraine. Despite the reactions to this crisis across Europe, it was Poland that welcomed >3 million Ukrainians in only 2 first months of the conflict (Lee et al., 2023). As a result of the novel situation, many spontaneous volunteers across Poland engaged (Byrska, 2023). It might be reflected in our findings. Those who intend to engage in the following month, but not necessarily in the long term, might be inclined to wait for suggested solutions regarding the refugees instead of taking initiative or actively searching for new opportunities, which might be time-consuming.

In the case of an imagined pandemic, consideration of immediate consequences played a role in all agentic responses for Poland and for initiating new volunteering opportunities within a known organization among Italians. A pandemic is a health-related crisis and, thus, is an emergency that requires immediate reaction (Fumagalli et al., 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic has visibly mobilized social support in Poland and Italy (Gierszewski et al., 2022; Masino & Enria, 2023). The typical pandemic-related volunteering related to either emergency or medical tasks (Bazan et al., 2021; Fumagalli et al., 2023) catering to the immediate needs, especially of people who were vulnerable to the disease or under quarantine, e.g., doing shopping, caring for animals (Bianchi et al., 2023; Jarynowski et al., 2020). These tasks can be considered temporary, and the pandemic was a crisis that was expected to finish – as were the time-constrained lockdowns.

Moreover, the negative emotions evoked by lockdowns, seeing information about the rate of infections and deaths daily, and shifts in everyday life could have encouraged people to engage in prosocial behaviors to relieve the negative emotional state (as proposed in the negative state relief theory by [Cialdini et al., 1987](#)). Elevating mood could have thus been an immediate positive consequence of prosocial behavior. In research conducted during the pandemic, it has been confirmed that present hedonistic perspective, which is connected to seeking immediate pleasure in activities ([Papastamatelou et al., 2015](#)) which could also be a facet of consideration of immediate consequences, was a factor related to lower depressiveness ([Bodecka et al., 2021](#)) and to prosocial sharing of items in the first days of lockdown ([Nowakowska, 2023b](#)). Therefore, we can suppose that consideration of immediate consequences could be a prerequisite of agentic responses to the pandemic, which is caring for other people's short-term well-being and/or own positive mood.

Moreover, consideration of future consequences related to initiating new volunteering in Poland during the pandemic, and to looking for new formal and informal initiatives among Italians. Consideration of future consequences promotes planning for the long term. Therefore, future-oriented people are more capable of planning new activities (Aspinwall, 2005). Presumably, in Poland, after the experience of COVID-19, the proactive, future-oriented volunteers have new ideas to be implemented as they can now see what long-term consequences their actions could have brought. For Italy, the future orientation related to seeking new opportunities outside a known organization. It may suggest dissatisfaction with the operations of their organization during the pandemic or noticing the potential of other entities in providing help.

In the case of the imagined refugee crisis, for Italy, consideration of future consequences played a consistent role in agentic and passive responses. Contrary to the pandemic, the refugee crisis typically lasts long. The refugees typically remain in the social system; they need to be integrated within the society, and thus, the work with them can be considered long-term. That is why people who can see long-term consequences may be inclined to engage in these situations, as they are ready to bear more costs related to their behaviors and wait for longer to see the fruits of their work (Maki et al., 2016).

Consideration of immediate consequences played a role in all agentic responses during an imagined refugee crisis in Poland and all volunteering intentions in Italy (both agentic and passive). The reason might be that the more relatively “fresh” and well-understood the experience with a refugee crisis, the more the care for not only long-term but also short-term consequences plays a role. Similarly to the pandemic,

immediate action is required to cater to the basic refugees' needs in an emergency – e.g., housing, clothing, and food (Sandri, 2018). Italian volunteers have been aware of this for a long time, as the influx of refugees has gone on for decades (Colombo & Sciortino, 2004). In the case of Poland, the situation with the Ukrainian refugees was the only one in the last decades that evoked a wave of social support mobilization (Byrska, 2023). However, the refugee support network is not comprehensive, as observed in Italy. That is why consideration of immediate consequences, in the case of Poland, could only be significant with the most proactive volunteers, who are ready to take on the initiative.

For the passive response to the case of a refugee crisis among Italians, not only the declared intention to volunteer in one month and three years, but also the consideration of future and immediate consequences and low social value orientation were significant predictors. A passive reaction does not imply lack of any support – as mentioned above, in the case of Italy, generally being able to consider short- and long-term consequences of behaviors can be related to an intention to volunteer during the refugee crisis. It could be the co-existent low (or more individualistic) social value orientation that decides about the passivity of the reaction. As low social value orientation is related to individualism and aversion to bear costs (Murphy et al., 2011), volunteers with this characteristic may outweigh the benefits of being affiliated to a group during a crisis (which protects their ego and lets them stay in the social network during tough time, which resembles the volunteer motivations: protective and social; Clary & Snyder, 1999) over the costs connected to engagement.

As indicated by a study by Nowakowska (2023a), volunteers with low social value orientation may be more inclined to declare that they want to be volunteers in the future if they have a co-existent future orientation. Our study broadens this result. Individualistic volunteers who consider the future may want to remain within the organization during a crisis; however, congruent with their selfish attitude to social interactions (Murphy et al., 2011), they do not intend to take the initiative to seek opportunities to help or initiate it.

Moreover, our studies suggest that consideration of immediate consequences has two sides – on the one hand, it can promote engagement in emergency actions to relieve the short-term adverse consequences of the event, but also thinking about the costs to be borne because of the engagement and giving up so as not to lose personally (e.g., lose free time, resources, energy). In the case of a hypothetical pandemic and Polish volunteers, a less prosocial personality may negatively affect socialization within the organization and result in lower intention to continue volunteering (Livi et al., 2020). That is why low social value orientation may contribute to the intention to refrain from activity, especially when the activities require more effort, such as during social crises. Moreover, length of experience with volunteering, accompanied by consideration of immediate consequences, can have ubiquitous effects on the decision to refrain from the activity during a crisis. In the case of Poland, the shorter the experience with volunteering and the higher the consideration of immediate consequences, the higher the intention to refrain. A pandemic was considered a past crisis at the time of the study in Poland, therefore, the less a person is attached to the volunteer role (the shorter the experience), the less they intend to put effort in the case of an event which is unlikely. On the contrary, in the case of Italian volunteers and the refugee crisis, the more experience they had with volunteering and the more they considered the immediate consequences, the more likely they were to refrain. This may be due to the fact that refugee care in Italy is based more on a formalized reception system (D'Angelo, 2019) than in Poland (Byrska, 2023), and volunteers who consider the immediate consequences (and thus may be inclined to care about the short-term benefits) and are experienced in the world of volunteering may want to invest their time elsewhere.

4.1. Strengths, limitations, and future research directions

Our study is the first to explore how people with experience in

volunteering declare to behave if a crisis occurs regarding their volunteering engagement. We focused on typical responses observed during a crisis, based on our literature review, observations and discussions; however, we acknowledge that this classification is simplified and people can behave in ways other than the ones we put as models. People also self-selected their predicted course of action, based on the reactions that we outlined in the survey. Future studies should involve qualitative designs. It would enable respondents to report the actions they would most likely undertake.

We looked at behavioral intentions. Given that real-life crises are very different from 'normal' everyday circumstances, it may be difficult or inaccurate to infer one's own reactions during such abnormal times. This must be taken into account when interpreting our results. We conducted two studies in purposefully chosen European countries, and the patterns of results could be different in other countries. However, having two studies, we could have noticed what patterns of results replicate across countries and which do not, and based on our knowledge about the experiences of countries with the pandemic and refugee crises, we searched for interpretations of these differences.

Importantly, according to our definition, we included only volunteers who were involved in some kind of formalized or non-formalized organizations, overlooking those who can volunteer independently. For example, such independent, spontaneous volunteers were involved in the Ukrainian refugee crisis, offering resources and even shelter to people in need (Byrska, 2023). Nevertheless, our sampling strategy was deliberate, given the nature of the research questions posed and the fact that we wanted to observe how people intended to behave towards the organization they were collaborating with in the event of a crisis. Future studies should focus on more diverse samples of volunteers and include a control group of people who have not volunteered in the past.

Our study was also conducted at a particular time, about a year and a half after the last lockdowns and the outbreak of war in Ukraine, so the experience of both was relatively 'fresh' for our respondents. Moreover, we recruited people with experience with volunteering at least once in their lifetime, and not the general population or active volunteers only. Future studies should employ a longitudinal design to study helping patterns over time. More predictors and control variables could also be included in the models, and different samples (e.g., a representative sample from the general population) could be involved.

5. Conclusions

Our study has implications for people who lead volunteer activities in regular and crisis times. It may help predict how people can behave based on their considerations for the welfare of others and the future consequences of their actions – traits important for prosocial engagement and observable in the course of their service. First, people who declare they want to remain volunteers would probably also intend to engage during social crises, but not necessarily proactively. Furthermore, consideration of future consequences can result in proactive attitudes in the case of crises, especially in Italy – a country with experience in dealing with a long-term refugee crisis. We presume that such prolonged crisis can activate people oriented at long-term tasks and outcomes. Consideration of immediate consequences can have twofold correlates – one might be the engagement in volunteering in case of a sudden emergency or refraining from the voluntary activity.

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Compliance with ethical standards

The study materials and procedure were approved by Research Ethics Committee at The Maria Grzegorzewska University. The study conformed to the Declaration of Helsinki (2001). All participants provided informed consent in accordance with Standard 3.10, Informed consent, of the APA Ethical Guidelines.

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CRediT authorship contribution statement

Iwona Nowakowska: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Validation, Conceptualization, Data curation. **Maura Pozzi:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Resources, Methodology, Investigation, Conceptualization, Supervision.

Declaration of competing interest

None of the Authors declare conflicts of interest or competing interests.

Data availability

The data can be accessed freely at Open Science Framework at: <https://osf.io/934w5/>

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