DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO TRUST YOU?
START BY LISTENING.
ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS.
NO MATTER THE SITUATION – FROM EARTHQUAKES, TO FLOODS, TO EPIDEMICS, TO CONFLICT – RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF WORK HARD TO HELP COMMUNITIES.

BUT IF WE WANT TO HAVE AN IMPACT, WE MUST WORK WITH AND LEARN FROM COMMUNITIES. WE MUST ACT ON WHAT THEY TELL US, ADJUST OUR WORK, AND BUILD ON THEIR IDEAS.
NOT INVOLVING COMMUNITIES CAN BE DANGEROUS.
Often, well-meaning humanitarians act too quickly without listening to the very people they want to help.

75% of people surveyed across seven countries say that aid does not meet their most pressing needs. *

If we want to be relevant to communities, we must listen to them first.

Otherwise, we waste time and money, and risk losing trust.

* 7,000 respondents surveyed by Ground Truth Solutions 2017-2019
IN PRACTICE
ACTIVE LISTENING SHOULD NOT BE LIMITED TO ASKING QUESTIONS AND NOTING DOWN REPLIES. THESE REPLIES SHOULD BE PUT IN CONTEXT. WE MUST BE SENSITIVE TO WHAT (AND WHO) MIGHT BE LEFT OUT.

"I TRUST THEM BECAUSE THEY KEEP COMING AND FOLLOWING UP."

COMMUNITY MEMBER WORKING WITH THE KENYAN RED CROSS
FEEDBACK IS A TWO-WAY STREET.

When feedback systems are in place, humanitarians have to act on the feedback – good and bad.

If we don’t, communities might stop sharing information with us, and our work could fail.
IN PRACTICE:

DISCUSS THE FEEDBACK YOU RECEIVE WITH THE COMMUNITY. THIS IS THE BEST WAY TO UNDERSTAND PEOPLE’S CONCERNS AND ANSWER THEIR QUESTIONS.

ACT ON COMMUNITY FEEDBACK BY ADJUSTING YOUR WORK AND APPROACHES. THIS WAY, COMMUNITIES SEE THAT THEIR VOICE MATTERS. IF YOU CAN’T MAKE CHANGES, MAKE SURE THE COMMUNITY KNOWS WHY, TO MANAGE EXPECTATIONS AND SO THEY CAN PLAN ACCORDINGLY.
DIFFERENT PEOPLE COMMUNICATE IN DIFFERENT WAYS.

The ways we provide information and gather feedback has to be accessible to different people — women, men, young, elderly and less abled people — so that all members of the community are involved, not only the most vocal.
IN BANGLADESH, 56% OF WOMEN WANTED TO SHARE FEEDBACK IN FOCUS GROUPS OF THE SAME GENDER. ONLY 4.5% OF MEN WANTED TO COMMUNICATE IN THIS WAY.

In Practice:

Use different channels to collect feedback formats depending on community preferences. Use the language that people are most comfortable in, not just the most common, and ensure that words you translate make sense in local contexts.
SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK OURSELVES:

WHAT CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION DO COMMUNITY MEMBERS PREFER?

IN WHAT LANGUAGE ARE THEY MOST CONFIDENT TO SPEAK OR WRITE?

WHO MIGHT FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ATTEND MEETINGS OR SHARE THEIR FEEDBACK?
AT WHAT POINTS IN YOUR WORK ARE YOU ALREADY WORKING ALONGSIDE COMMUNITY MEMBERS? WHERE ELSE COULD YOU?

HOW CAN YOU ENSURE OUR WORK IS CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVED ACCORDING TO FEEDBACK?

HOW CAN YOU MAKE SURE THAT YOU DON’T JUST COLLECT FEEDBACK, BUT THAT YOU ALSO COMMUNICATE FINDINGS WITH THE COMMUNITY?
LEARN MORE FROM THESE RESOURCES:

• CHECK THE MOVEMENT-WIDE COMMITMENTS ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

• LOTS OF TOOLS AND PRACTICAL ADVICE IN A GUIDE TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

• LOOKING FOR A CASE STUDY TO LEARN FROM? LESSONS LEARNED BY THE KENYA RED CROSS AND IFRC ON ACCOUNTABILITY TO COMMUNITIES

• CHECK OUR FEEDBACK STARTER KIT
ILLUSTRATIONS
AND CONCEPT BY
THE ENGINE ROOM