**Principles for community engagement**

**and guidance on conduct of Ebola Response Actors**[[1]](#footnote-1)

V9: 20-10-19 [Democratic Republic of Congo, approved by UN Emergency Ebola Response Team (EERT), awaiting DRC Ebola Coordination team validation and dissemination]

The principles for community engagement aim to strengthen the quality of support from all Ebola Response actors doing community engagement, regardless of their official role or title. All response actors, regardless of their technical fields or employers, need to know that their actions and behaviors have an impact on the effectiveness of the entire response. The following principles must be constantly respected by all:

1. Ebola Response interventions are informed by the local **needs, priorities, values and languages** of community members.
2. Response actors must communicate in a respectful, transparent, and open manner in order to create a climate of trust. Communities are significant stakeholders in response actions. We can invest in dialogue and listening, not just one-way information flow. Clinical language that may stigmatize community members and people affected by Ebola Virus Disease should be avoided in public settings: “Suspect case,” “non-compliant,” etc.
3. Response actors should facilitate the active participation of community members. It is crucial that **communities play a leading role** in deliberations, as well as in the design and execution of actions that affect them.
4. Response actors should not reinforce power inequalities in the community through their technical actions in the field. All members of the community should be **treated with** **respect** , regardless of their social status, their position in the community, without any consideration of gender, identity, creed, and without discrimination of any kind.
5. Response actors should be prepared to **register community concerns** and questions and continually adapt or improve actions based on feedback on the quality, availability, accessibility and acceptability of services. Community comments should be listened to, taken into account and used to guide and - improve or adjust the actions of response team members.

I have read and understood these principles and I undertake to respect them in the context of my work.

Date : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. NOTE: Guidance on how to give a briefing on these principles can be [found here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/19fPZNvGZMaWzjDx9evnMCfQQMLnF7ri-F3k_lUEwr2M/edit?usp=sharing). These principles were drafted by a multi-organization working group at the level of the “Emergency Ebola Response Committee'' (EERC) (Oct. 5-17, 2019), with discussion and validation at the Coordination level (Commission Communication) on October 24, 2010. All technical partners, including government counterparts and security specialists, who participated in the daily meetings of the central Ebola Response Coordination in Goma were invited to contribute. These principles were drafted following a [security incident](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TkEilhJVuN11uVV89axaN06owI6epXEC/view?usp=sharing) that led to the attack on an Ebola Response health center and a [machete attack](https://drive.google.com/file/d/17mbrk4WOvTPHqRf0rCyWW9vg_YhdHRwF/view?usp=sharing) on a local police officer (non-lethal, but major injury resulting). As principles, rather than rules, they are commitments to be **voluntarily accepted**. There are no penalties attached, and these principles are not applicable in the legal arena. The principles inspired and adapted from: [Core Humanitarian Standards](https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/files/files/CHS_French.pdf) , the [Accountability Commitments to Affected Populations](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy_files/AAP%20Committments%20Engagements%20French.pdf) and the initiative “ [Community Engagement Standards](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cWxysFtixMCt3ef2pdhioLH0ZCHIq460EbTGwuX-hh4/edit?usp=sharing) ,” (UNICEF and multiple agencies, with the support of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation/BMGF), [see consultation list here](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1aXh01uPkcUA6HjiIY8iJfEBHWk9N44IkWaQqBSTotOs/edit?usp=sharing) , July, 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)