

# **MANAGING EXTERNAL DONORS**



# **LESSONS FROM THE FIELD BY FOCAL INTEGRITY TEAM CAMEROON**

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# IMPORTANCE

It is important for any FIT to maintain good relationships with its/ our donors as managing such relationship is critical to the survival of your organization. Donor funding is usually very competitive and limited because of the many non-governmental organizations (NGOs), requesting for funds. As FITs need to secure sufficient resources to achieve our goals and fulfil your mission. It is through our relationship with donors that our FIT becomes connected with potential funding. The deeper the relationship, the stronger that connection, and the more likely that donor will support your organization and its mission. However, just because a donor supported a program once, does not mean it will do so forever. Donor loyalty and trust must be earned again and again.

# How can a FIT earn Donor Support

- Comply with the Donor rules for funding
- Demonstrate effectiveness of the FIT's interventions and communicate
- Maintain constant communication to effectively strengthen your relationship with donors and maintain/gain their support.

# Assurances that Donor Look For

When communicating with donors, keep in mind three main concerns because they shape a donor's perceptions and willingness to continue supporting your FITs program. Donors want reassurance that your organization is:

- Using its funds effectively and efficiently for the purpose originally intended;
- Effecting positive change on the lives of the individuals or communities the donor aims to serve
- Reflecting positively on the donor through a good image and reputation

# Things FITS Need To Do To Develop Strong Donor Relationship

It is usually easier to nurture and build on an established donor connection than to start from zero. The Tips below will help reinforce your relationship with major external donors.

# **Be An Effective and Timely Communicator**

Communicate effectively. Be as clear, direct and honest in your communication with a donor as you can whether verbally and in writing

# Learn to Follow Up

Follow up after you hold a meeting or write to a donor.

After key meetings or conversations between the FIT leadership and the donor, Leadership should ensure to send a written summary of key issues discussed and follow-up actions. This creates a record of the meeting and clarifies decisions and actions that will be taken in the future.



# Responsibility to Donor Request

Be responsive to donor requests. When a donor requests information respond quickly. Ask questions if possible to ensure you understand what is being requested and when it is due. If a request is unrealistic, be honest and explain why. If it will take you some time to compile the information requested, be clear about when you can submit it.

# Learn to Keep your Promises

Make realistic promises and deliver on them. Be careful not to compromise the quality of your work for the sake of speed. Thus, when facing a deadline, ensure you can deliver what you promise with a worthwhile product.

# Use Donor Funds Appropriately

Use donor funds as expected. Implement your program as described in your proposal; that is what your donor “bought.” Notify the donor of any needed alterations (for example, changes in scope, location of work, target audience) to your work right away in order to get guidance on how the donor would like you to proceed.

# Deliver Reports on Programs on Time

Submit accurate, complete programmatic activity reports on time.

Reports and other deliverables document your program accomplishments and successes. Therefore, it is critical that FIT deliverables are clear, well-written and without errors so that they reflect well on your organization and may be shared with other funders and stakeholders.

Emphasize quality over quantity. Meet the deadlines set by your donor as this demonstrates your professionalism, reliability and responsiveness. Know your donors well enough to link their support With your organization's activities, progress and results they find most meaningful.

# Do not Make Surprises and Share Achievements

FITs should not surprise their donors. Be open and truthful about challenges and barriers in your program as well as successes throughout the period of performance.

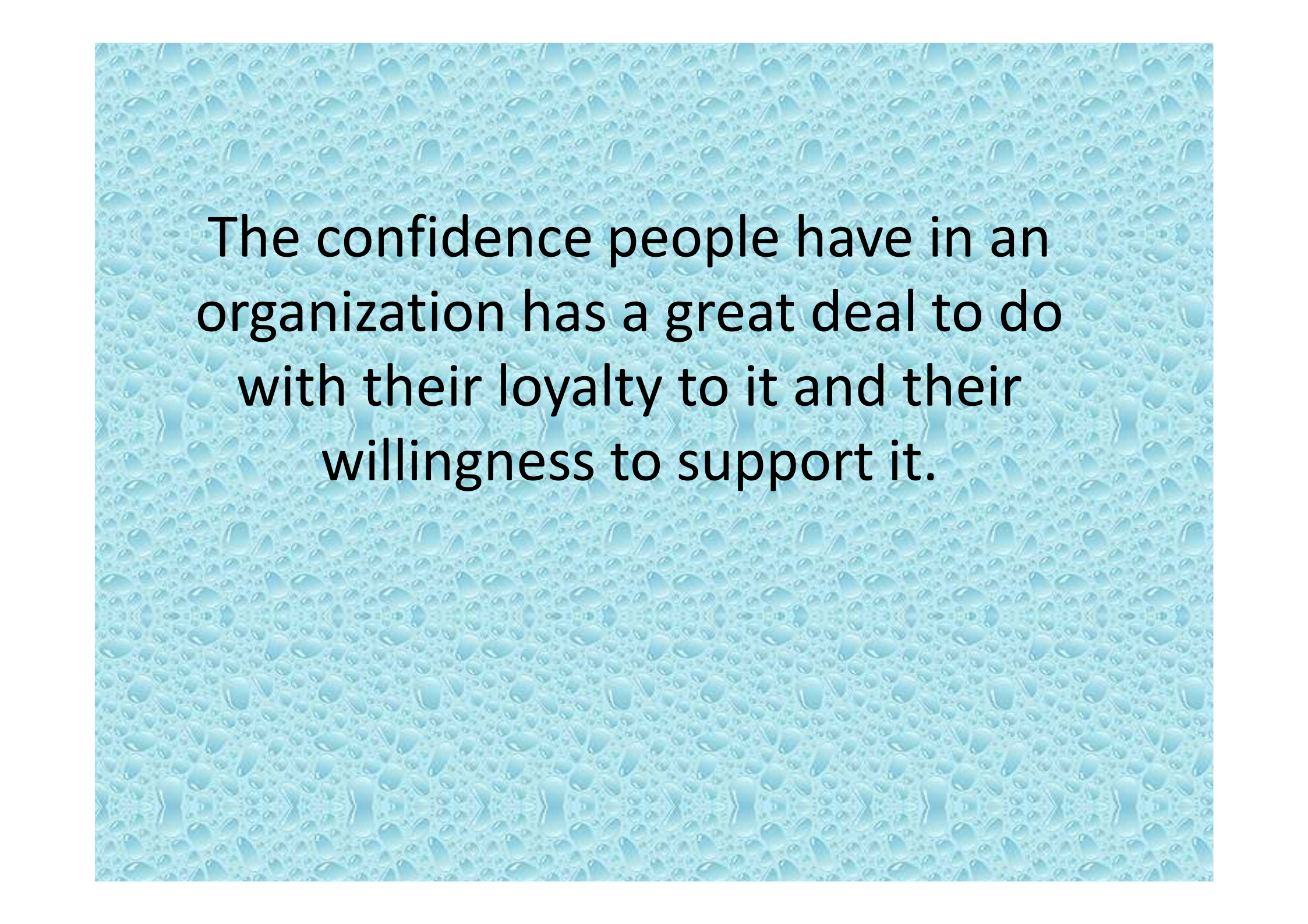
Setbacks and missteps are normal and most donors understand the challenging environment in which you work (eg PTF with our UB Project). If you maintain an open and collaborative relationship, there should be no surprises when your donor receives your deliverables/challenges. Share your achievements. Recognize and give credit to donors. Tell the FIT's story *and disseminate program* results broadly and through a variety of media—newspapers, radio, Web sites, social media, conferences, meetings, special events. Make sure your donor's support is always acknowledged in accordance with your marking and branding plan as necessary *and* thank the donor for their support. In addition, you may wish to invite your donor to participate in events, conferences or meetings where you present program findings and results.

# Plan and Prepare for Donor Site Visits

FITs should anticipate donor visitors and prepare for them as opportunities to showcase their work and program.

Our organisation's local and global reputation and image can be affected by the impressions made in known and spontaneous interactions with high level donor officials, international and local visitors in addition to new volunteers and staff whom we have recruited.

A well organized and informative introduction and site visit with program stakeholders is an important way for FITs to communicate their successes and needs. FITs should always plan ahead and have strong spoke persons available to showcase their work to visitors, potential donors and advocates.



The confidence people have in an organization has a great deal to do with their loyalty to it and their willingness to support it.



Thank You for Your Kind Attention  
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