

## Maintaining Relationships with Donors

### Why work on relationships with donors?

- Donors can be a source of good publicity for the organization.

If an organization or other funding body has provided financial or in-kind support to the project, they are likely to share information publicly about that project.

- Donors can connect organizations with peers in their field.

Donor organizations or bodies have extensive networks of contacts. They can be a good source for recommendations for partners or invitees for events.

- A current donor may provide additional funding in the future.

Some donors provide follow-on grants for projects that are seen to be successful.

- The organization's reputation may be harmed with other potential donors.

Donor organizations may have connections to each other on shared areas of interest.

Disabled persons' organizations (DPOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) often receive grants to support programmatic and other expenses. Maintaining a good relationship with a donor is important for several reasons, highlighted in the callbox to the left.

### How to Get Started

#### Include the donor's logo on materials created for the project.

Most donors require that their name or logo be used on materials created for the project in order to show their support for the work being done. It's critical to recognize the contribution made by the donor; often, a project would not have been possible without their support.

#### Invite the donor to events.

Whether an organization is providing financial or in-kind support, their grant or donation shows an interest in the subject matter. The donor is likely also to take an interest in the quality of the organized event not only in order to determine how well the money or other contribution is being utilized but also to take part in workshops, conferences, or other events. Donor organizations learn from their interactions with those who receive contributions and make connections from those relationships.

#### Share pictures from events with the donor.

When organizing an event, it can be easy to forget to bring a camera. Although not every donor requires that pictures be made available from an event, all donors appreciate photos. Pictures provide a lot of information for donors about how well the event was attended and what kinds of activities took place during the event. Photographs can be more powerful in representing an event, for example, a picture of a young person with a disability speaking to a room of government officials is more impactful than a sentence describing that event.

#### Take note of special reporting requirements.

Most donors require periodic reports on the progress of a program. When receiving a grant or other contribution, it is

important to create a calendar with the due dates of periodic reports. Submitting any reports or other documents in a timely manner is an easy and important way to maintain a positive relationship with the donor organization. Neglecting to submit reports on time is a red flag for donors and may affect their ability to be flexible during any obstacles encountered over the course of the project.

Additionally, there may be additional requirements for some reports, such as photographs from events, participant lists, or pre- and post-workshop surveys. In order to account for these requirements, it is important to read the grant agreement thoroughly and create a list of what is required for each report to the donor.

### **Update the donor on any expected changes to the program.**

It is critical that donors be made aware of any changes to the program. Often, a contract has been signed between the donor and DPO or CSO that indicates how the funds or in-kind contribution will be used. Not only does it facilitate a good working relationship to provide updates and ask questions about programmatic changes, but many donors have an approval process by which changes must be made.

### **Check in regularly with the donor.**

Be proactive in communicating with donors in order to demonstrate a serious commitment to producing quality work for the project. Updates are not one-way; donors can have large networks from which organizations can find peers for projects or invitees for events.