SESSION TITLE : Successful regional office development and management

CONVENER(S): Mike Dawson – PCTA

PARTICIPANTS: N/A

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:
Setting up and maintaining a regional office

- Develop a strategy (short and long term plans) that you can present to others and then revisit, maintain, and allow to evolve
- Ensure it will mirror the whole organization
- Work with your partners (i.e. divide duties)
- Matrix management model
- One director to oversee all regional offices
- Before setting up a regional office there needs to be a strong core
- A strong core needs maintained throughout
- Physically visit and talk with other organizations who have regional offices in place
- Ensure there is funding available
- Have a substantial travel fund set up

Facility

- Develop partners for the small things (ex. custodians and building maintenance)
- The ideal facility (home office vs. multi-room unit) will evolve over time; remain flexible
- Partial expenses may need to be covered for home offices

Regional staff

- When hiring, be clear about the duties (long hours, away from home, etc)
- Staff needs endurance, commitment, and self-discipline
- Provide them with morale boosters
- Ensure they have the resources and tools needed
- Be available to their needs
- Give them their independence
- Develop regular communication and contact
- Include partnership feedback
- Be pro-active about feedback
- Staff needs to be adaptable to feedback-loop
- With multiple staff separate duties clearly but have one manager to oversee projects, take responsibility, and provide a connection to the central office
- Invest time and effort in the new-hires, immerse them in the organization and trail culture
- Convey management philosophy (ex. spend time with them in the field, tell stories)

All staff

- Ensure there is a clear communication pathway that everyone is using

- Provide communication opportunities (ex. staff meetings, conference calls). Build them into the schedule and be diligent.
- Ensure that everyone is aware of what is going on in each region
- Provide the opportunity for group contact (ex. staff retreat) lying the foundation for a support group and friendship
- Have one management guide that includes: responses to issues, conflict resolution, and standard management methods. This provides regional staff with a resource when you are not available for questions.
- Roles and responsibilities will evolve through time on all levels