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Results important when choosing a charity

When choosing a charity, individuals often find it difficult to narrow down the list of deserving recipients. A host of factors must come into consideration, but most individuals end up choosing a charity they have some personal connection with.

While it's important to donate to a charity you feel strongly about, it's also important to do your homework before making a donation. One of the more important factors to consider is the charity's results. Charities vary greatly in their ability to bring about meaningful change, with some producing better results than others. When determining how effective a charity is, there are several things to look for prior to making a donation.

The Mission

Can the charity adequately explain the need for its existence? A charity should be able to explain in detail the reason for its existence and that there is a significant demand for its services and programs.

Reporting of Results

A charity should have a statement as to how they monitor their results. Their methodology for monitoring results should be clearly stated and available to prospective donors to examine. When examining the results, look to see how frequently results are reported and how much the results relate to the charity's mission statement. If results are older and less specific, con-

sider another charity. Also, when asking for a report on the charity's results, ask if these results were validated by an outside source.

Activities

A charity should be transparent, providing prospective donors with more than just heartfelt stories as to what inspired and continues to inspire the charity. Ask about the charity's activities related to its mission. For example, if a charity's mission is building schools in impoverished countries, ask how many schools they have built and if there is any data that compares the current situation to how it was before any schools were built. How frequently are these activities reported? In the case of the above example, can donors expect to be notified every time a new school is built, or are reports harder to come by?

Going Forward

Before donating to a charity, ask how the charity has adjusted to past successes and/or failures. A charity's past results, be they good or bad, should help shape how it goes about its business going forward. If the charity continues along the same path without regard to past results, this should be a red flag to donors.

Choosing a charity is no small task. But donors should emphasize results when determining which charity deserves of a donation.

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