

International Statement of Ethical Principles in Fundraising

December 7, 2006

PREFACE

Fundraisers work in many varied fields, countries and circumstances, but they share several fundamental values and practices: they work to make the difference, help others and save what is valuable, in fact to make the world a better place. It is for these reasons that fundraisers strive to identify and employ best practices.

It is the purpose of this Statement of Ethical Principles to foster the growth of a worldwide fundraising community dedicated to accountability, transparency and effectiveness. In this Statement we want to set forth what unites us in the way we practise our profession. Recognising that in many countries there already exist codes of conduct and standards of practice, the intent of this statement is to unify the global fundraising community behind a single universal declaration of fundamental principles. Organizations and individuals who endorse this Statement are not necessarily abandoning existing codes or standards, but are announcing their interest in a global understanding of these fundamental principles.

Applied in different cultural settings, this Statement can provide guidance for initiating best practices in newly developing markets. It also provides a clear alternative to local customs which may not represent best practices. Adherence to this Statement should also advance the common purpose of assuring public trust in the non-profit sector while discouraging personal gain at the expense of donors and stakeholders.

A form of words has been incorporated within the statement in paragraph 5 where use of the words “**will**” and “**must**” indicate what is a mandatory requirement and “**should**” what is regarded as best practice by all organizations endorsing the statement. The statement recognises that fundraisers operate subject to many different jurisdictions and that they must observe the law of the jurisdiction in which they work. However, it is expected that fundraisers adhering to the principles of the statement should

adhere to the most rigorous interpretation of the law (and of the Code of Ethics of their own Membership Association) applicable to an activity, whichever jurisdiction that activity derives from.

FIVE UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES

Five important principles for acting as a fundraiser:

Honesty: Fundraisers shall at all times act honestly and truthfully so that the public trust is protected and donors and beneficiaries are not misled.

Respect: Fundraisers shall at all times act with respect for the dignity of their profession and their organisation and with respect for the dignity of donors and beneficiaries.

Integrity: Fundraisers will act openly and with regard to their responsibility for public trust. They shall disclose all actual or potential conflicts of interest and avoid any appearance of personal or professional misconduct.

Empathy: Fundraisers will work in a way that promotes their purpose and encourage others to use the same professional standards and engagement. They shall value individual privacy, freedom of choice, and diversity in all forms.

Transparency: Fundraisers stimulate clear reports about the work they do, the way donations are managed and disbursed, and costs and expenses, in an accurate and comprehensible manner.

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

These standards are presented with the recognition that fundraisers operate subject to many different jurisdictions and that they must observe the law of the jurisdiction in which they work. However, it is expected that fundraisers adhering to these standards of practice will, first and foremost, adhere to the most rigorous interpretation of the law, and of the Code of Ethics of their own membership association, applicable to an activity, whichever jurisdiction that activity derives from.

1. Fundraisers responsibility regarding **donations**.

- Donations should be accepted if voluntary, in line with the goals of the organisation and will bring not more than reasonable costs related to the value of the donation.
- Funds will be disbursed in accordance with the donor's wishes, if expressed.
- Funds will not be raised for the personal financial gain of the fundraiser or the fundraising organisation the fundraiser works for.
- Funds will be collected carefully and with respect of donor's free choice, without the use of pressure, harassment, intimidation or coercion.

2. Relationship with **stakeholders**.

- Fundraisers are strictly answerable to all stakeholders including donors, beneficiaries, and employers.
- Fundraisers will respect donor rights by providing timely information about how contributions are used, respecting donor privacy, and honouring donor wishes.
- Fundraisers will respect beneficiary rights and preserve their dignity and self-respect. They will not use fundraising materials or techniques that undermine this dignity.
- Fundraisers work with suppliers or intermediary agents at the same standards as within their own organisation. They make reasonable efforts to assure that suppliers do not gain unreasonable profit while working with their own organisation.

3. Responsibility for **communications**, marketing and public information.

- Fundraisers will only use public information that is accurate, truthful and not misleading, and information that respects the dignity and self-respect of beneficiaries.
- Fundraisers will not express or suggest in public information that fundraising lacks administration and fundraising costs, thus giving the incorrect impression that fundraising activity is without costs. Fundraisers will object to their organization expressing or suggesting that fundraising activity is without costs.

- Fundraisers will provide truthful information about use of funds, without exaggeration or underestimation.
- They respect data protection rules and laws at all times.
- Fundraisers accept that all donor and prospect information developed by or on behalf of an organisation shall not be transferred or utilised except on behalf of that organisation.
- Donor wishes to be removed from request lists will be followed promptly and without obstacles for the donor.

4. Management **reporting**, finance and fundraising costs.

- Fundraisers assure that all fundraising transactions, accounting and reporting for which they are responsible are transparent and unambiguous. They are able to account anytime for their professional work.
- They will encourage their organisation to report within the national and international standards of accounting methods.
- They will submit accurate annual reports to all stakeholders within a reasonable time or encourage their organisation to do so.
- Fundraisers will be open and clear to all stakeholders about fundraising costs, fees and expenses and the way these are allocated.
- They will make any compensation arrangement transparent to an employer, donor, and beneficiary upon request.

5. **Payments** and compensation.

- Fundraisers provide their services either as a volunteer, or on a salaried basis or for pre-determined fees. Fundraisers should not accept commissions or compensation based upon a percentage of the funds raised.
- Fundraisers will not accept any gratuity when making decisions on behalf of the organisation.
- Fundraisers will not seek or accept any personal payments, in cash or in kind, from a supplier of goods or services in recompense for business placed with that supplier.
- Criteria that will qualify a fundraiser for performance-based remuneration must be agreed upon beforehand and should not be based on a percentage of the funds raised.

6. Compliance with **national** laws.

- Fundraisers will object if the organisation they work for does not comply with applicable local, state, provincial and national or international civil and criminal laws.
- Fundraisers will not engage in activities that conflict with national and international legal obligations to their organisation or to others. Moreover, they will avoid even the appearance of any criminal offence or professional misconduct.