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Fundraising policy for the Church of Sweden

Introduction

About the Church of Sweden

The mission of the Church of Sweden is at all times and in all situations to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed. The Church of Sweden is an open church that welcomes all who seek it out: believers, seekers or doubters, members or non-members.

The Church of Sweden is part of the worldwide church and collaborates with other churches locally and globally. Like all churches, the Church of Sweden is charged with supporting people in their vulnerability and safeguarding the Creation. Locally, it is represented by parishes, whose basic tasks are to hold church services, teach and practise mission and diaconia (welfare work). The efforts of the dioceses and the national level are to support and encourage the work of the parishes.

The basic approach of the Church of Sweden is to strive to empower all people to improve their situation themselves. In order to do this, it works with church relations, long-term development, advocacy, and crisis and disaster relief.

About fundraising

Sharing resources is central to the Christian faith. God has given us life, and none of us own it, which is why we must share with those who lack what we have in abundance. In 'Jesus sends out the twelve', Jesus says "Freely you have received; freely give" (Matthew 10:8).

The Church of Sweden's international mission and diaconia is largely financed by donations, various fundraising campaigns and collections. The parishes abroad play an important part in raising funds for and financing the Church of Sweden Abroad's activities. Fundraising can be crucial to being able to perform these activities.

Fundraising through collections and campaigns provides a significant source of financing but is also an important activity, as fundraising and making donations give people the opportunity to express their faith through actions. Fundraising helps create a sense of identity and participation while specifically laying the foundations for people to help support their fellow human beings, both in Sweden and abroad. Knowledge and commitment combined with trust in the Church of Sweden make people prepared to give their time and money.

The fundraising market is becoming increasingly professional. Competition between fundraising organisations is increasing and donor behaviour is changing, with fewer donors loyal to a single organisation while the number of fundraising organisations is increasing. The costs of collecting money are on the rise and the Church of Sweden must use efficient, competitive methods that yield the most from each Swedish krona invested.

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Definition of fundraising and funds raised

Fundraising is the process of planning, performing and following up on the collection of money or other resources with the aim of supporting the Church of Sweden's activities.

Funds raised include grants, collections, donations from individuals, companies, organisations, associations and private and not-for-profit funds and foundations, and sponsorship. Also included are bequests and donations, lottery income, the value of donated assets, and income from funds raised where the donor is given proof of donation, e.g. badges and stamps. Special guidelines for e.g. corporate collaborations and collections are being drafted to be included in the fundraising policy.

Applications for funds from government bodies, international bodies or the equivalent are not viewed as fundraising efforts in this policy.

About the fundraising policy

The fundraising policy is binding at national level and serves as a guideline for other levels. It is based on the governing documents adopted by the Central Board of the Church of Sweden: the Church of Sweden's Communications Platform (2004), Visual Strategy (2005), Strategy for Intra-Church Communication (2009) and Finance Policy (2010).

Fundraising policy

Checks are crucial

The Church of Sweden must comply with applicable legislation for registering personal data and donations, which in Sweden is the Personal Data Act and the Accounting Act. In addition, the Church Ordinance guarantees that information on each individual donor is not disclosed to third parties.

The Church of Sweden holds a registered charity account and is therefore subject to inspection by Swedish Fundraising Control.

The Church of Sweden is a member of the Swedish Fundraising Council. It must comply with the ethical guidelines for fundraising applied by the Council that have resulted in a code of quality for charity organisations.

Fundraising methods in line with basic values

The Church of Sweden must actively work to raise funds. It must be flexible in its choice of methods and be at liberty to adopt new methods provided that they do not go against the basic values of the Church of Sweden and respect for donors.

The Church of Sweden is obliged to receive funds from dioceses and parishes through collections and grants, along with donations from associations, private individuals, organisations, companies and other potential donors.

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The Church of Sweden must not carry out fundraising campaigns aimed at children and young people under the age of 18. It is however obliged to take donations from children's groups, confirmation groups and similar activities in which children's efforts result in joint fundraising.

Respect for the donor

Communication during fundraising activities must be based on the documents governing communication that have been adopted. The Church of Sweden must comply with the international code of conduct drawn up by the Red Cross and Red Crescent in collaboration with the ACT Alliance and other humanitarian organisations. This code includes portraying people in vulnerable situations in a dignified manner, not as 'helpless victims'.

The purpose of the communication is to ensure that donors feel a growing sense of commitment, and to contribute to good fundraising results. The aim is to communicate with donors based on their wishes to the greatest extent possible.

A donation is always voluntary and can never be taken for granted. Each donation should be managed with care and with respect for the individual donor.

The Church of Sweden must send a note of thanks to donors making donations for the first time if they have given their name and address when making the donation. After that, expressions of thanks must be sent to those donors who wish to receive them in accordance with separate procedures.

All donors who have given their names and addresses must regularly receive information about activities. Donors must be able to opt out of receiving information.

The Church of Sweden must process and respond to questions, points of view and complaints from donors without unnecessary delay.

The Church of Sweden is a member of the global ACT Alliance and complies with its communication guidelines.

Repayment

The Church of Sweden must repay donations where obvious errors have occurred or where the donor changes his or her mind, provided that this takes place within a reasonable period of time.

Special purposes

Those who donate money to the Church of Sweden shall be entitled to have money earmarked for a purpose that the Church has described. The Church of Sweden must take donations that are earmarked for special purposes when it is possible to meet the donor's wishes. If the Church of Sweden is unable to meet the specific wishes of the donor, the donor must be contacted to discuss whether another suitable purpose can be identified or, if the donor so requests, for the donation to be repaid.

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Declining donations

The Church of Sweden is entitled after due consideration to decline donations. This may occur if it is known that the donor's income has been acquired in a way that conflicts with the Church of Sweden's basic values.

Management of funds raised

The Church of Sweden may at its earliest convenience convert all donations in the form of securities and real property into liquid funds.

The Finance Policy adopted by the Central Board regulates investment of funds raised.

Division of responsibilities

The Central Board is responsible for the Church of Sweden's registered charity account and for ensuring that the code of the Swedish Fundraising Council is complied with. The representatives' organisation determines fundraising goals and how resources are to be allocated in order to achieve them. The line organisation of the Central Church Office decides on the choice of methods and fundraising activities.