

# Policy for Fundraising Communications with Supporters who may be vulnerable

## **1 POLICY STATEMENT**

Trócaire's Vision, Mission and Values state that we believe in the intrinsic dignity of every person, celebrate difference and aim to create relationship of mutual respect wherein the rights and dignity of every person are respected.

Making a donation to our work is one way that supporters demonstrate their shared commitment. This support continues to make a real difference for women, men and children living in extreme poverty and injustice in countries throughout the world. We believe that engagement with our fundraising activities should be a positive experience for all.

We recognise that every supporter is an individual with a unique background, circumstances and experiences and that every interaction between a supporter and us is different. We strive to treat supporters fairly by providing information so they can make informed decision about their donations, while recognising the needs of any potential support who may be vulnerable.

## **2 PURPOSE**

It is inevitable that we will come into contact with people who are vulnerable and not able to make informed decisions about their giving. This can happen either through our own communications or through communications from the agencies who work on our behalf. This document outlines how we take all reasonable care to identify supporters who may be vulnerable, and what action we take if we suspect a person is vulnerable.

## **3 SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Trócaire staff who are engaged in fundraising activities or any staff member who may receive a donation from a member of the public. Equally it applies to any agency staff or volunteers who are contracted by Trócaire to engage in fundraising activities.

## **4 DEFINING – SUPPORTER WHO MAY BE VULNERABLE**

In this context we recognise that a supporter may be vulnerable due to:

### **4.1 Mental Capacity**

Mental capacity is the ability to make a decision (as per Capacity legislation). Decisions can range from those relating to everyday activities to more significant decisions, which have a long-term impact on our lives.

### **4.2 Vulnerable Circumstances**

Someone who has the capacity to make a decision but who may need extra care and support depending on their personal circumstances, health, bereavement, life events. Additionally it may

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relate to someone whose capacity to make a decision might be temporarily affected at that point in time (e.g. influence of alcohol or drugs)

### **5 GUIDING DOCUMENTS AND PRINCIPLES**

In order to ensure that Trócaire's fundraising activities are conducted in line with the highest standards and best practice our fundraising is carried out in accordance with:

- The Institute of Fundraising including guidelines set out in document entitled 'Treating Supporters Fairly: Responding to the Needs of People in Vulnerable Circumstances and Helping Supporters make Informed Decisions
- Charities Regulator - Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public

When considering supporters who may be vulnerable the following principles specifically apply:

- **Respect** – treating all members of the public respectfully. This means being mindful of, and sensitive to, any particular need that a supporter may have. It also means striving to respect the wishes and preferences of the supporter, whatever they may be.
- **Fairness** – all supporters should be treated fairly. This includes not discriminating against any group or individual based on their appearance or any personal characteristic.
- **Responsive** – this means responding appropriately to the different needs that a supporter may have. The onus should be on the fundraiser to adapt his or her approach (tone, language, communication technique) to suit the needs and requirements of the supporter.
- **Accountable** – it is up to fundraisers and charities to take responsibility and care to ensure that their fundraising is happening to a high standard. When thinking about ways of communicating with different people and fundraising appropriately, different charities should consider what processes and procedures they may need in place. Charities may want to develop their own internal guidance on this area and consider how to ensure that their fundraisers are appropriately trained and supported."

### **6 PROCEDURES**

#### **6.1 Training Staff**

Trócaire staff and staff from agencies acting on our behalf will receive training on supporting supporters who may be vulnerable. This training includes recognising when supporters may need additional support to make decisions about donating and how to respond in circumstance where they feel a supporter may not be in a position to consent to make a donation.

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## **6.2 Responding to a supporter who may be vulnerable**

Every interaction between a fundraiser and supporter is different. Therefore, the response in one circumstance may be different to another. Through training and guidance, we seek to ensure that the most appropriate response is taken on each occasion. Response may include:

- Deciding not to ask for a donation during this conversion
- Ensuring the person is not contacted again to ask for a donation
- Suggestion that the person consider what they have heard about the organisation and to make a donation at a later stage

Trócaire recognises that an individual fundraiser may not have all the facts. We will take all care not to cause offence or upset an individual.

## **6.3 Returning Donations**

Where a donation has been received and it is later confirmed that the person did not have capacity to make an informed decision about the donation Trócaire will seek to refund the donation.

Some donations may be more difficult to return immediately (e.g. where time has passed and the donation has already been spent on charitable work), however our approach will always be to seek agreement on how best to refund the donation.

To comply with audit and anti-fraud processes all applications for refund of donations must be in writing or via e-mail.

## **6.4 Communicating with relatives or someone acting on behalf of another person**

On occasions, family members may contact us on behalf of a relative to say that at the time of donating that the supporter was not able to make an informed decision. Requests include asking for the donation to be returned, terminating a regular gift or ensuring that the individual is not contacted again.

In this circumstance, in order to protect the rights of the supporter (including data protection), we will ask for additional information or proof of authority (including in writing) before we can enter into conversation with anyone acting on behalf of another person.

## **6.5 Planning fundraising activities**

When designing and implementing fundraising campaigns, Trócaire will consider the needs of people who may need extra support to make an informed decision or may be in a vulnerable circumstance and consider what appropriate actions may be needed to accommodate their needs e.g. the range of fundraising materials, the format and language.

We recognise that people may feel more vulnerable when approach in a one-to-one/face-to-face fundraising ask. We ensure that all our fundraiser apply best practice including:

- Having appropriate ID
- Accepting 'No' as an answer and not pursuing further
- Being polite and courteous

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- Are appropriately trained to respond to queries

### **6.6 Responding to Complaints**

We appreciate importance of feedback and complaints in ensuring that Trócaire remains an open and transparent organisation. This includes feedback and complaints in relation to our fundraising activities. Complaints or concerns can be raised in person or by phoning any of our offices or through our website by using the 'Contact Us' communications option.

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### **Trócaire – Refunds Policy**

Trócaire works hard to ensure that the process of making a donation is as smooth and user-friendly as possible. Donations can take many forms:

- Credit card donations via [www.trocaire.org](http://www.trocaire.org)
- Cheques/Postal Orders/Cash received through the post
- Credit Card donations made over the telephone
- Lodgements/Transfers directly to Trócaire's bank account
- Scheduled regular donations made via direct debit/standing order/recurring credit card
- Donations (including One4All Gift card purchases) made through the Post Office

We fully appreciate that making a donation to Trócaire is a voluntary act. Consequently, if you change your mind about contributing, or if you mistakenly donate an incorrect amount, Trócaire will respect and honour your decision to request a refund provided it meets the following criteria:

- A request for a refund must be made within 14 days of the date on which your contribution was made
- A request for a refund must be made in writing (email will suffice) and should include details of the original donation and reason for refund request
- Refunds will be returned using the original method of payment i.e. if you donate by credit card, then your refund will be credited back to the same credit card
- In the case of cheques, the refund will be returned to the original account holder

If the original donation is deemed to have been made by a “donor who may be vulnerable”, Trócaire will require a note to that effect from a qualified professional (as per our Policy for Fundraising communications with supporters who may be vulnerable)

To request a refund please call +353 1 629 3333 (ROI) or +44 289080 8030 (NI) and a member of our Donor Services team will be happy to discuss the matter further with you.

Once agreement has been reached about the validity of a refund, and provided all relevant paperwork has been forwarded to Trócaire, we will endeavour to have the refund processed within 7 working days.