



Transitioning Donors

*Bringing your supporters on
the journey to a new model*

Introduction

Good ministry cannot happen without stable funding. When planning to transition your model of care, it can feel overwhelming. How will you bring donors with you? How will you fund initial costs?

Over the past year, we have studied organizations who have successfully transitioned to a family-based model and brought their donors with them.

Getting donor buy-in is the biggest challenge

The most significant problem that orphan and vulnerable children-focused organizations face is getting buy-in and bringing donors along on the journey.

Without donor buy-in, transitioning can come to a halt due to inadequate funding. This can negatively impact an organization and the children in their care.

As a result, choices about care quality may need to be made based on funding, rather than the best interest of children.

Donors may disconnect because they do not understand the need for transition and change. They may be very committed to the current model. Additionally, donors may have concerns for child safety that need addressing, along with questions regarding the orphanage buildings, staff, and infrastructure.

That's why we focused on researching this critical issue to help you. CAFO engaged with [markempa](#) to study how OVC-serving organizations inspired donors to give toward a new model of family-based care.

In this guide, you'll learn the five steps to help transition your donors to improve fundraising outcomes and create the financial capacity to provide better care for vulnerable children and families.

Need for family-based care

Both Scripture and science affirm that the best environment for children is within a loving, secure family. Our work should always seek the best interest of the child, including placement in a permanent family setting as soon as possible. For this reason, a significant number of OVC-serving organizations that provide residential care are now shifting towards family-based care models.

Family-based models of care focus on providing the love, nurture, and security that allows a child to thrive through reintegration with biological parents, kinship care, foster care, or adoption. Additionally, a vital part of supporting family care is strengthening families to prevent unnecessary separation.

See the [resources](#) on page 47 for additional materials and tools for family-based care.

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Theology of fundraising

There's often or discomfort around fundraising, but what does the Bible say?

Four Important Beliefs for Fundraising

1. God is capable of providing all the necessary funding – [Psalms 50:9-16](#) and [Philippians 4:10-19](#)
2. God has promised to provide for the needs of those who seek His Kingdom first in their lives – [Matthew 6:33 4](#).
3. Encourage donors to give boldly - "...I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" ([Acts 20:35 NIV](#)).
4. Financial partnership is one way for people not called to serve directly in mission ministry to be a part of what God is doing and see His glory revealed around the world. Support can come by way of prayer and finances for the work of the ministry. ([Matthew 28: 19-20](#) and [3 John 7-8](#))

Scriptural Principles that Relate to Fundraising

1. God has no lack of resources.
2. God, as His power works in and through us, can do what is impossible for man to accomplish. It will often be far more than we could ask or imagine.
3. God has promised to do great things through us. Our role is to invite Him to act.
4. When we do not have what we need, it can be because we do not ask. Alternatively, when we do ask, we must ask for reasons that align with God's will.
5. Giving comes from a willing heart - "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" ([2 Corinthians 9:7 NIV](#)).

The journey to transition donors can feel a lot like climbing a mountain. However, you're not alone. You're going to get guidance based on the experience of others who have gone before you. They will be your Sherpa to help you on along the way.

The five steps to bring donors with you on the journey

We found organizations who brought donors on their journey successfully followed these steps to help improve fundraising outcomes:

1. **Share** your learning about family-based care
2. **Segment** and map donors with empathy
3. **Identify** and share your most potent stories
4. **Build** your donor communication plan
5. **Change** your fundraising ask and calls to action

Step 1: Share your learning about family-based care



Step 1: Share your learning about family-based care

It's about changing mindsets

Engage your donors to help them understand the reason behind your transition. Members interviewed said this process could take a longer than you would expect because people need to digest information and shift their paradigm.

Prepare yourself to talk about change and transition

Your donors are an essential part of the process; they want to feel like their making a difference an impact through beyond just their gifts. Leaders who didn't speak first to donors later regret not investing enough time to get buy-in and as a result, lost financial support.

- ☐ Learn about how other organizations changed to their model
- ☐ Gather research, articles, videos, stories about family-based care
- ☐ Collect positive stories about organizations who changed their model for your context
- ☐ Meet/Call leaders who have already transitioned to a family-based model
- ☐ Visit a site that has already transitioned
- ☐ Review local laws for compliance angles
- ☐ Provide information to key donors before taking the first steps in the change

Talk to your donors before you begin making changes

As soon as you start thinking about transition, discuss these thoughts with your donors. Pull key donors in for strategy sessions and brainstorming. They need education and support.

If you're not personally engaging with donors, make sure the person talking with donors has the support and information to make those conversations go smoothly. Later we'll talk about building your communication plan and conversation outline, but this step is essential.

Prepare donors for change

Once you've prepared yourself, you need to talk to your donors. Don't skip this step of preparing donors and getting buy-in before you start to shift.

- ☐ Call/Meet with significant donors to share stories and early vision
- ☐ Educate with one-on-one meetings
- ☐ Tell your donors what you are doing and thinking
- ☐ Answer donor questions surrounding the transition
- ☐ Provide access to research
- ☐ Talk about the changes you're making and updates on your progress
- ☐ Ask what's in the best interest of children
- ☐ Share family reunification stories

Donor Frequently Asked Questions

Be sure you have considered these questions before you talk with donors.

- Will the kids be safe? How do we know they won't go into abusive/poor conditions?
- What if families do not want their kids back?
- Can we still visit the kids? Can mission trips continue with these changes?
- What will you do about the building investment? What about the name of your building?
- How will the staff handle the change? Will they lose their jobs?
- Do these families have the capacity to care for the children?
- If kids are in families, what will the program do?
- Have we been funding work that harms children?

Consider how you will answer these questions before you speak with supporters.

Explain why kids went to the orphanage in the first place

Learn why children are in your program and share in broad strokes with donors (don't share names or identifying information). Many kids are in care because of lack of access to resources, and others may be in custody due to neglect, abuse, or health reasons. Some children are not orphans and have families. Family retracing can help answer these questions. Donors need to know many children have relatives who may be able to care for them with financial and psychosocial support.

Share stories with donors highlighting that kids want to be in families

One member shared a story of kids saying, "I want a family, adopt me, take me home." Sharing examples and testimonies of children in your care is compelling. Help your donors understand that children want to be in a family.

Talk with donors and staff and asking, "what's the best thing for the child?"

Asking "what's the best thing for the child?" is a compelling question that OVC-serving organizations found helpful. Share how asking and answering this question influenced your transition journey

Communicate change is here/already coming

Share that change is coming, and no matter what happens you need to adjust. If you know about specific changes, let donors know how changes are coming from either legal, legislative changes, policy changes, or restrictions on funding.

Get comfortable saying, "I don't know how exactly this is going to work yet."

In transition, you can't know exactly how things will look. Being open and transparent about what you're doing and why, and where you're not sure, helps invite others to rally and understanding.

You don't need to have it all figured out and can get more people on board and rallying when you're open about what you're not sure of, what's working, and what's not.

Update emails and social media content with stories about family-based care

To start, begin sharing stories related to family care in your newsletter, blog, and social media posts. If you don't have a regular newsletter for communication, consider doing monthly email updates or letters.

Donors need to be informed. We'll dive more into how to communicate in step 4 on building your donor communication plan. Here are some ideas you can consider:

Provide research

As you learn, make sure to set aside information that you think would be helpful/useful to share with your donors and other stakeholders:

- ☐ Share stories and information about why kids went to the orphanage in the first place
- ☐ Tell how kids want to be in families
- ☐ Provide research, links to videos, or quotes on the need for children to be in families
- ☐ Show how a family impacts child development
- ☐ Highlight other OVC organizations that transitioned to a family model of care
- ☐ Talk about changes you need to make and why

See the resources section on page 40 for more resources on family-based care.

Change the stories you highlight

Start to layer in stories about reunification, kinship care, foster care, or adoption for your context, such as the following:

- ☐ Celebrate children going back to their families or family reunification
- ☐ Highlight a child going to live with a loving relative (kinship care)
- ☐ Share how your work might help keep more families together
- ☐ Remind supporters how your care model focuses on the best interest of children
- ☐ Share stories and pictures when a child gets to be with family ("goodbye" cake and banners)
- ☐ Show donors how they are also making an impact

For example, **Figure 1-1** on the following page is a newsletter update about Tony's story. The story celebrates Tony leaving the orphanage and going live his aunt and uncle with a "goodbye" cake.

Additional Resources

Whether child or adult, a person's physical image and story represent them.

So, photos, film, and stories of any person should be created and shared only in ways that respect their wishes and affirm their dignity as beings made in the image of God.

When it comes to children, wise use of images is also an act of child protection – honoring each child's dignity and guarding them from voyeurism and exploitation.

For more on this read:

[Wise and Honoring Representations of Children in Media](#)



connect
WITH US

hear our
STORIES

rescue
INFANTS

sponsor
A CHILD

empower
FAMILIES

come
VISIT

GIVE

Defend the Cause of the Orphan and Widow

TONY'S STORY

October 26, 2016

This week, our precious Tony went to live with his aunt and uncle in a rural area of Kenya — it is about 2.5-3 hours away from our home. Tony's mom will also be able to move to live with her family, very close to Tony. She loves him very much, so we are praying his move home will also produce positive change in her life. She had not been to see her family in nearly 10 years. The family was overjoyed to meet Tony and to see her after such a long time.



Tony has been very excited to go and stay with his uncle and aunt. We have visited and talked about it a lot to prepare him. It took a long time to find them, but we are so thankful that a couple of months ago it came to our attention that they existed and were eager to have Tony come and live with them. It is a very different way of life than what he has known with us for the past two years, but we know he will adjust quickly!



We are thankful for their willingness to welcome him and with the help of his sponsors, we will be able to ensure he attends school and gets some nutritional and medical support so he can continue to thrive while he is home with family. We have enjoyed the 2 years we have had with him — he is such a genuinely sweet and kind little boy. He went with his Jesus Storybook Bible, two toys he picked to take with him, and his clothes. From the first day Tony was content with his family and cousins. That is a huge answer to prayers as Neema House is what he has known for the past two years.



We had a party yesterday for him and he was very happy to have his own "goodbye" cake. God writes the very best stories and we are so privileged to watch Him work. At Neema House, we take every opportunity to celebrate! I am thanking God for the way he has made a way for Tony to be in a family. God surprised us with this reunification being a possibility and it reminds us to keep trying even for the cases which seem impossible to solve.

Annie, Missionary

Figure 1-1 Tony's story

Tony's aunt and uncle were eager to have him live with them with the help of his sponsors.

Source:

<https://project82kenya.com/tonys-story/>

Reflections questions

Pray and reflect on these questions and start to think about answers based on your research.

- Why do we want to change our model of care?
- Who should I consult on this decision before making it?
- What supports and assets do we have in place?
- How will we get buy-in from our donors?



Step 2: Segment and map donors with empathy



Step 2: Segment and map donors and with empathy

Dig in and try to understand who your donors are and what they care about specifically.

Review your donor list and recent giving

Get the list of your donors and their giving history to understand your sources of funding. Identify the critical sources of funding in your donor base.

You can go beyond the amount of giving to segment other ways. For example, you can focus on specific interests or how donors gave to you? Did donors respond positively to a specific program? Are donors giving online or via mail?

Identify champions in your donor base

You have a network of donors and other stakeholders. However, within that, you have a core number of more influential members. Supporters who have the most influence may not be your largest donors.

That is why it is essential to determine who are your more influential donors because they are the first ones you'll need to approach to get buy-in.

- Who is already on board?
- Whom can you get excited?
- Who influences others?
- Who can become an advocate?

Consider the relationship power dynamics

There are power dynamics in all human relationships. Some people would like to control what others do, but they do not want to be told what to do.

Relationship dynamics can get more complicated when they involve money, and the person you are in a relationship with is a donor. You want to analyze and start to map out the power dynamics of your donors.

Be objective in this step to make sure you're not missing anyone. You may have donors you know have lots of influence but may be more challenging to get to buy-in than others.

List the donors to target first

Create the list of donors you'll reach out to first. Begin to think about how you want to engage them and develop a plan (covered in Step 4).

Give special consideration to major donors

You may have some donors that only your CEO or Executive Director should be contacting. Make sure you consider those high-level donors when you're developing your strategy. As you review your donor list, discern who the best person would be to connect with them.

Use empathy to know donor motivations better

Move away from organization-centric thinking to donor-centric thinking and speak to your donors' motivations. Apply empathy, which according to Merriam-Webster, "is the ability to share someone else's feeling." You need to understand how your donors feel and take their perspective.

Group donors based on their comfort level and crafting a tailored message

Categorize donors based on their comfort level. Some donors will be stuck on how you've always done fundraising while others will want to fund more innovative ideas and projects. Moreover, you may find some donors view transitioning as a red flag.

Tailor your message to your audience. The only way to know their comfort level is by having conversations with donors. See this journey as an opportunity for you to connect and deepen your relationship with supporters by understanding them and their motivations better.

Help your donors achieve THEIR outcomes

Realize that donors give for a variety of reasons from "just doing my part," to fulfilling their spiritual obligation, to "it's a worthy cause."

Other supporters may be involved because they have a personal relationship to you or connection to the leader of your organization. Some may give to experience the joy of giving.



No matter what, donors want to feel they are doing something useful. They respond to people who need help. Donors are not giving to be called heroes.

Show your supporters how their gifts make a positive difference. You want donors to feel great about being generous, caring people who want to make an impact.

Communicate that “we can’t do this important work without you and your support” and “you are part of this.” Donors want to know they are making a difference.

How to build an empathy map for your donors

Empathy mapping is a process to help you to put yourself in your donor's shoes. Using this method can help you understand your donors better and glean surprising insights.

In sum, you will capture donor insights based on what is observable (what they are saying and doing) to understand better the underlying motivation driving their behavior (what they are likely thinking and feeling).

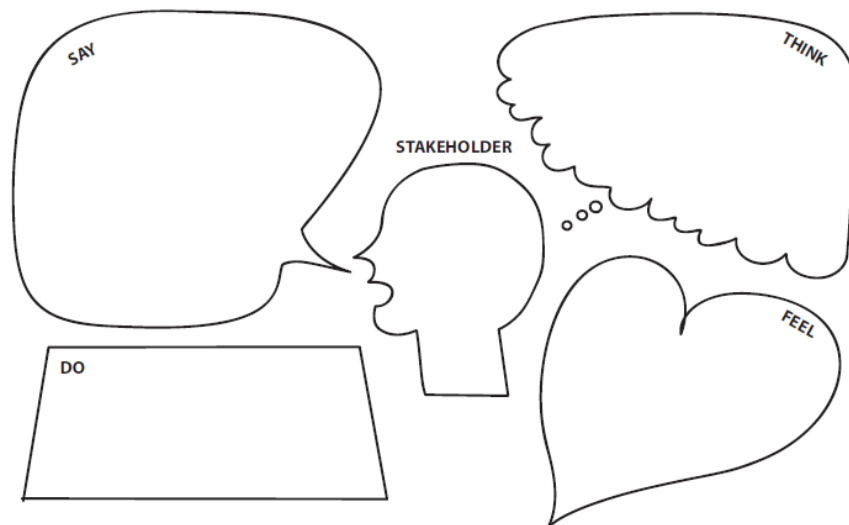


Figure 2-1 Empathy Map

Step 1: Draw four quadrants

Create different empathy maps for each segment of donors (major donors, online only and more). Use on a whiteboard or a sheet of paper draw four quadrants for Say, Think, Feel and Do. See figure 2-1 above.

Step 2: Fill in your map.

Pull together and think about what you know about your donors. Gather any notes and donor research you have collected as part of segmenting donors.

Say: What is your donor saying? Notice keywords and the distinctive language they use.

Think: What may your donor be thinking? Infer this based on what you're hearing and observing.

Feel: What might your donor be feeling? What do you notice that indicates their emotion?

Do: Notice their nonverbal behaviors or actions. What are you observing?

Tools you can use for empathy mapping:

- Plain 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper and a pencil
- Large poster paper and post-it notes
- Mind mapping software

If using a whiteboard, you can write or use Post-it Notes to capture input. Take pictures of your map to catch your notes.

Step 3: Determine donor motivations and desires

What is your donor trying to do? You're trying to understand the motives from the perspective of your donor. You want to understand their motivations and desires. Write down your donor's possible motivations along the side of your empathy map. Note: Motivations are verbs, not nouns.

Step 4: Glean wisdom.

This step is where you apply your empathy using your intuition. Your goal is to understand why. In this step, you will review your empathy map and start looking for themes. What are the things you are noticing? How are your donors feeling based on what you're hearing them say and seeing them do? You may notice something surprising. Jot down your insights and questions.

[Download the Empathy Map Checklist for more detail](#)



Reflections questions

- What are you observing about donor motivation?
- What are the personalities of our donors, board members, and staff?
- How do might we need to target our messages differently to each segment?



Step 3: Identify and share your most potent stories



Step 3: Identify and share your most potent stories

Why stories matter

Sharing a personal story from a place of conviction is the most powerful communication device you have. This is what the best communicators do. They share stories that emotionally connect and remind us that we are all human.

How to identify and tell your most potent stories

The idea of sharing your story with donors sounds great until you try remembering your best stories to share. You may find it difficult to recall them.

Gather and remember your stories by triggering memory recall

Rather than trying to remember stories chronologically, here's another way to collect and retain your best stories:

Step 1: Brainstorm

Get a notepad and think through the nouns (people, places, and things) that are important to your work, impact your work, and why you are making the transition.

People.

Write your name in the center of the paper, and start drawing out the relationships: family, friends, volunteers, donors, coworkers, children and so on. Each time you draw a line between you and another person, think through the dynamics and emotions there's a story in there.

Places.

Get as specific as you can in recalling sites: the place you work, the country, church, city, street, building, campus, where your children are, locations you met children, and more. Write down each location and place. Retrace your movements. Do they trigger sites, sounds, and smells? This step will help resurface memories and long forgotten stories and interactions.

Things.

Take note of objects or items that have symbolic meaning in your life: gifts, picture, mementos, books — any meaningful possessions. Sketch drawings of these symbols and remember what makes them emotionally meaningful and why.

Step 2: Summarize your stories

After completing the above steps, review the story nuggets you've jotted down. Write a one-line summary for each one. Some of the stories you captured may not be appropriate to share. Others will be a remarkable story or anecdote you can share with donors' time and again.

Step 3: Catalog your stories

This process may seem like extra work. However, once you do this step, you'll have a group of stories to share in many types of situations.

- Review your list of stories and begin to organize them by type and situation.
- Build story catalog in the preferred way you like to work (i.e., spreadsheet, or notepad)
- Make your stories easily accessible for you to use and share in conversations and messaging to donors.

Step 4: Choose stories based on your audience

Be intentional about what you say and why. As you review your stories, think of the one that's right for your audience.

- What's your intention behind the story?
- Why are you telling it?
- What's the intended impact?
- Does it serve a purpose?
- What's the message and emotion you want to communicate?
- Is it structured in a way to hold the donor's attention?
- What's the punch line, and is that punch line memorable?

Provide education to donors on the WHY before the HOW

Help your donors get excited about your new project or focus without making them feel like you're changing your core purpose.

Highlight that you still have the same mission to care for children but found a better way to accomplish the purpose.

When you share your story, explain what you have done, why you're doing it, and why it will be better for children.

Story themes used by OVC-serving organizations to help transition donors

- Sharing family reunification stories with child's history background
- Celebration party and updates for kids going to back to families
- A child wants to be in a loving family/they have a family (asking "will you adopt me?")
- Family preservation/keeping families together story
- Foster care stories showing members of the community getting involved
- Educating about why kids went to the orphanage in the first place (mostly due to poverty)
- Using storytelling to help fund specific projects (school funding/scholarship, social workers)
- Whenever possible, back up your story with data you have collected
- Stories of the local church supporting family care

Next, we'll show some sample stories shared by CAFO members.

Figure 3-1 is a story from Project 82 Kenya illustrating an example of a family reunification celebration.

PROJECT 82
KENYA

connect
WITH US

hear our
STORIES

rescue
INFANTS

sponsor
A CHILD

empower
FAMILIES

Defend the Cause of the Orphan and Widow

PETER IS HOME

May 14, 2016



We had a party last night for Peter and then he left early this AM with a group of our staff who were headed to a training class in Nairobi. Yesterday he was so happy about his own cake, shouting “birthday of Peter! birthday of Peter!” because the kids associate cakes with birthdays. He didn’t stay with us long enough to celebrate a birthday, but we are happy about that. So thankful for the time we got with this sweet and unique little soul.

Yesterday Peter packed up his new “piki piki,” a couple of his favorite toys, and some clothes and he was on his way this morning. Our staff dropped him off with his auntie. Peter will be living with his aunt and uncle, and two older cousins. They are all very excited to welcome Peter into their family. This is what we pray for every one of our kids and we are so thankful that Peter is now knit back into a family that will be his for life! God is great!

Annie, Missionary

Figure 3-1 Peter is Home - “Peter will be living with his aunt, uncle and two older cousins.”

Source: <https://project82kenya.com/peter-is-home/>

who we arewhere we workwhat we dodonorssubscribedonate



CAMBODIA
hope in the form of piglets in Cambodia
look on the piglet

While in Cambodia on a recent trip visiting our projects, Orphan's Promise Regional Manager, Tim Duvall, had the privilege of meeting with a precious family from the Bless a Child Project that OP supports. This is their story...



Aunty Nim is a poor widow living in rural Cambodia who used to struggle to even meet the basic food and education needs of her family. Nim lovingly took care of her niece, Srey, and a number of other children from her extended family. While never having had any formal education of her own, Aunty Nim wanted to do the best she could to make sure that Srey, and the other children she cares for, got better opportunities in life than she did.

Orphan's Promise has helped Aunty Nim and Srey to realize new opportunities through the Bless a Child project. Srey has received education assistance, nutritious lunches, and has heard about Jesus through Superbook and the partnering church. The family now enjoy attending the local church regularly.



In October 2014, as part of the Bless a Child project, Aunty Nim received a pig from Orphan's Promise to help her become more sustainable to support Srey and her family with their education, food, and living costs. Over the last few years, this pig has produced so many piglets (seven litters of pigs, with some litters up to 10 piglets at a time) that Aunty Nim has even saved enough money to put in a water well for her family to have access to clean water.



Aunty Nim and Srey are so grateful and no longer need to worry about how to meet their food and education costs. Their burden is a lot lighter now as they reap the rewards of their new opportunities...and the smiles on their faces show it.

**help us strengthen families
and keep them together**

[make a difference today](#)

Figure 3-2 Help us strengthen families

Orphan's Promise tells a compelling story of how donors helping a family to buy a pig helped keep a family together in Cambodia

Call to Action

"Help us strengthen families and keep them together"

Source:

<http://www.orphanspromise.org/hope-in-the-form-of-piglets/>

Reflections questions

- What stories do we have that fit the themes shared by other CAFO members?
- What are my most powerful stories to share with donors?
- How else might we inspire donors around our vision to change?

Next, we'll discuss how to build your communications, messaging plan.



Step 4: Build your communication plan for donors



Step 4: Build your donor communication plan

Building a donor communication plan is critical to your transition and fundraising success.

The most important thing to think about with donor communications is that you're not doing it to bring in money.

You are investing in building relationships.

Here is why:

You could create the best message and appeal letter, but if that is the only time your donors hear from you, you are not building relationships or communicating well.

Just like the process of changing your model will take time, so will communicating with your donors.

Also, communication is a two-way street. You need to talk to donors and actively listen to feedback to make sure your messages have clarity and resonate.

You will pair your communication plan with a rolling 12-month calendar, so you have a place to review and plan.

What is a donor communication plan?

Your communication plan is a combination of both messaging and timing.

In sum, it provides the who, what, where, when, and why for donor communications and fundraising campaigns.

Begin with the why - what is your goal and why?

Now, answer the **why** behind your messaging. As part of your why, you will define your fundraising goals.

- ☐ Why is your model is changing?
- ☐ Why is the direction you are headed better for kids?
- ☐ How will this new model continue to fulfill the core purpose of your organization?
- ☐ Determine fundraising goals
- ☐ Create your calls to action
- ☐ What's the model of expected costs for the transition?
- ☐ What amount are you asking for and why?

Do you know your numbers?

For more information to determine your goals for "funding your new model" see page 31.

Focus on whom you will reach with segments

Next, you need to identify **whom** you are looking to engage with segmentation.

You need to segment your list to make sure your communication is on point and successful.

Your donor segments could include significant donors, lapsed donors, monthly donors, online donors, prospects (potential donors), volunteers, and more.

For example, if you have a smaller list of 100 donors, you can treat each donor personally. That's 100 people treated like major donors.

- ☐ Dig into your list and understand who your donors are and what they care about
- ☐ Consider donor motivations or concerns, and what they with gain or lose
- ☐ Think about donor interests. Did donors respond to a particular program?

What is segmentation

At this point you should have built your list of segments in step 2 of this guide.

If you have not completed step 2 on segments, go back now before you develop your communication plan.

Craft your communication plan for each segment

Now it's time to craft your strategy for each donor segment. You will answer the following questions:

What will you say?

Where will you communicate it?

When will you say it?

Decide what you want to say

Think about what your donors will respond to, not just what you want to say.

Help your donors get excited about your new project or focus without making them feel like you're changing your core purpose.

Review your past messaging with donors. What's worked? What requests and appeals created the most response?

- ☐ Write down ideas and stories you will communicate over time to donors from Step 3.
- ☐ How might you engage donors differently?
- ☐ Organize content, stories, videos, research based on what you want to communicate

Determine where you will communicate

You have many channels to convey your messaging, and you need to determine where and how you will say it.

- ☐ Where will you communicate your messages?
- ☐ Determine your channels for the communications plan (I.e., email newsletter, blog, social media)

Figure 4-2 below lists the main channels and content you'll likely use for communicating with donors. Your tactics will include online, direct mail, events, phone, and email. Social media helps amplify your message channels.

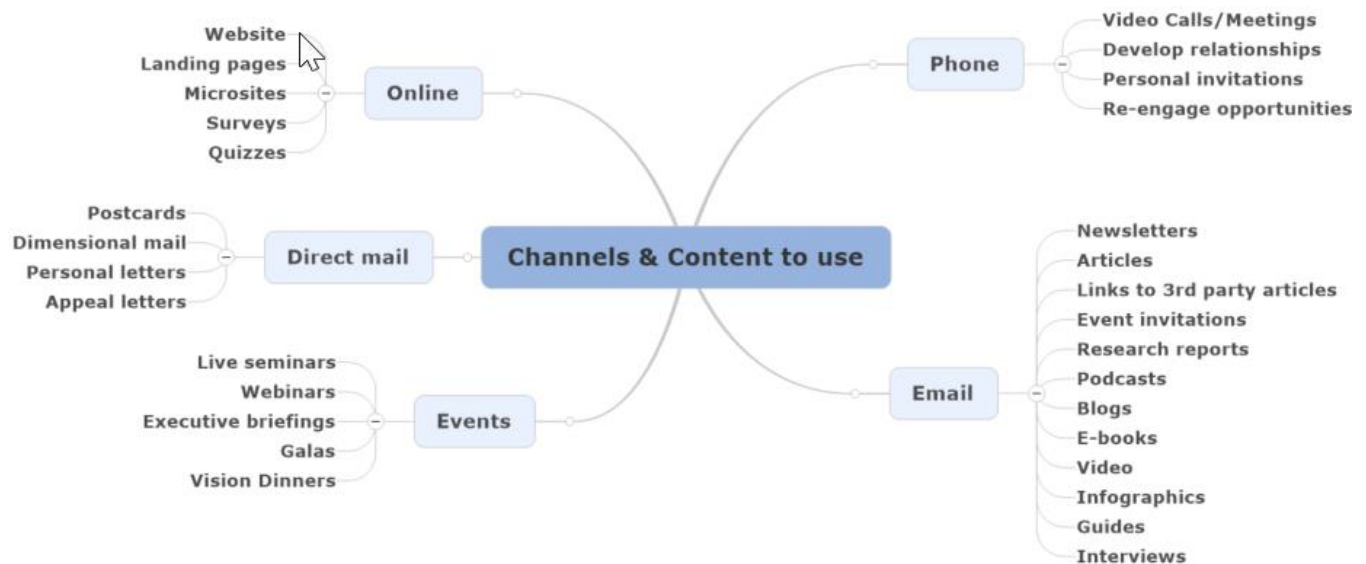


Figure 4-2 Fundraising channels and content to use

Next, you will plot out your communication calendar for the year.

Build your communication calendar to schedule when you will say it

Positive donor relationships depend on consistent and ongoing communication. We recommend using a simple spreadsheet to manage your donor communication calendar.

You will do the following:

- ☐ Develop a communications calendar for each donor segment
- ☐ Plot your schedule of communications over the next 12-months
- ☐ Make sure your messages hit on multiple motivational drivers at the same time
- ☐ Prepare conversation guide/talking points for communicating with donors (see page 29)

The channels you employ, and the frequency of touches in your calendar will depend on previous work you have completed so far.

Next, we will go through an example calendar and a communication template you can use.

Example communication calendar with monthly updates

The following example is a communication calendar with one touch per month scheduled:

- Month 1 - Phone call and a follow-up email to donors
- Month 2 - Newsletter update via email and social media updates
- Month 3 - Send a blog post link via email and leave phone voicemail referencing email
- Month 4 - Email with phone voicemail for upcoming event or Gala
- Month 5 - Send an email message with a link to a third-party article
- Month 6 - Send video link or story via email
- Month 7 - Direct mail letter and follow-up phone call
- Month 8 - Email story and call to action with follow-up call mentioning email
- Month 9 - Email update “story” about your impact for a child in a family
- Month 10 Email newsletter
- Month 12 Year-end giving appeal

Communication calendar template

We created a donor communication calendar template for you. To access it, [click here](#).

To use the calendar template, make sure you select **File > Make a Copy** command on the menu.

Month	Segment					Channel						Purpose				Message/Format
	Major	Monthly	Online	Prospects	Lapsed	Direct Mail	Email	Online	Event	Phone	Social Media	Fundraising Ask/CTA	Thank you	Impact Update	Invite	
January	x						x			x				x		Personal email with p
January		x					x			x				x		Newsletter update
January			x				x							x		Phone call and a follo
January				x		x							x			Direct mail letter and

Fill in your calendar with things you are already doing. Add in things like your monthly giving invitations, newsletter updates, events, appeal letters, annual fundraising campaign, and more.

See where there is room to improve and gaps in your communication once you have mapped out your current activities.

Look for ways to overlap your messages across channels. For example, have a direct mail letter going out at the same time as the email? Try to integrate your communications to reinforce your message and increase conversion.

Confirm your team is on board before you communicate with donors

Make sure your staff at all levels, whether they're in fundraising, development or programs are well-versed, onboard, and committed to this change. If not, you need to know and address it before they talk with your supporters.

Donors will often talk with other members of your team. If your team doesn't buy-in, it can damage trust or add anxiety. You may potentially lose donors because they engaged with staff who weren't as onboard and committed with the transition as you want them to be.

Engaging messaging that inspires donors

Put your heart into connecting with supporters and inviting them to be part of this transformation.

Donors are essential partners in your mission and not just a source of money

You want your donors to feel great about their involvement and inspire them.

In sum, put the relationship first, and you'll raise more money.

Help supporters feel they are part of the bigger story

Donors do not get inspired by reading a laundry list of tasks you have accomplished. They want to hear stories about impact.

A simple story is more memorable than a list of updates.

Highlighting a positive story from the standpoint of success, "this is working," "this is taking off" and "we have seen this child flourishing," "we helped reunify this child."

You want your donors to feel like they are a part of the story. Ask them for suggestions. Keep them updated.

Write for donors and not your high school English teacher. Your communication does not need to be perfect. It needs to be genuine.

Messaging for major donors is not a cookie cutter thing

Ask major and mid-level donors about getting involved in the project, "what's meaningful for you?"

It's not a cookie cutter thing about what you should say. You need to consider and adjust for each conversation.

Some different approaches to consider are:

The Impact Perspective: "How do we reach a lot more children?"

With the institutional care model, you have limitations on how many children you can reach. Using a family-based model, you can help and reach more children with the same resources.

Share your excitement. Help your donors understand that you have the same purpose but have found a better way to do it. For example, by taking this approach, we can help more children/kids and still stay true to our mission. This approach is our answer to what's in the best interest of the children.

Answer donor questions

Address donor losses if changing child sponsorship model

Answer what we will do if we no longer have orphans?

Answer what we will do with our buildings/staff?

Will the kids be safe?

The Emotional Perspective: what would you want for your child if you were their parent?

“If you could not parent your kids, would you want them raised here, what would you want for your child?” It’s a simple question, but the answer is not simple.

Supporters realize no matter how wonderful the residential facility or campus, they would want their kids to be raised by a family member or in a family setting if they could not parent them.

The Economic Perspective: Make the business case.

You want to show that gifts go much further with the foster care program or a family strengthening program. Orphanages cost us X amount of dollars. For those same dollars, you can do foster care and care for this many more kids.

The Evidence Perspective: Talk about the best interest of children

Educate donors that the reasons behind the changes are about what’s in the interests of the child. Work with donors to answer what’s in the children’s best interest and your organization's best interest.

Resistance?

If you experience ongoing challenges with resistance watch this video:

[Friedman's Theory of Differentiated Leadership Made Simple](#)

Connect with donor emotions

In step 2, we talked about the importance of empathy. Donors will experience many feelings as they go on the journey with you.

They may have spent time raising money, volunteering, going on trips and more. As a result, they invested emotionally. Even though you might be used to the idea, donors need time to catch up and ongoing communication.



Resistance is a normal part of changing mindsets

Donors may be reluctant and resistant to adjust at first. Recognize that you’re changing the paradigm, and they need to shift their mindset. As you educate donors, you need to continue to press forward.

Action inspires buy-in

Members shared that once they made the decision to change and moved forward, they earned respect for leading the way.

Moving forward in unison with your team can inspire others to support your work. Taking bold action can take away reluctance and encourage more buy-in.

Conversation guide for talking with donors

This brief guide will help you prepare to have conversations with donors and help you answer why you want to go through this transition and make a change. Use this tool to put together relevant talking points and data for your specific context.

1. Share your "why" story (select one story you developed earlier in Step 3)
 - a. When you share, include data as part of a story.
2. What made you want to consider changing your model? Why now?
3. Tell the donor what you are doing and why you are doing it.
 - a. Identify that care decisions need to be made based on the best interests of a child
 - b. Share research that children need to live in a loving family whenever possible for healthy development into adulthood (see Appendix 3)
 - c. Children want to be with their families
 - d. Not all children in orphanages are orphans (do family retraining and share why kids are in care)
 - e. Many struggling families can care well for their children with some support (even if it looks different than our culture/context)
4. Share about other organizations in your context that have adopted a family-based care approach
5. Message donors on a business case to answer, "how do we reach more children?"
6. Get comfortable with saying, "I don't know how exactly this is going to work yet."
7. Talk about the changes you're making and updates on your progress.
8. Share how much financial support you will need. What will you ask your donor to do or pray about?

Child Safety

Address the steps that will be taken to protect children as they move to family care:

Children will not get sent to abusive families or environments

Each child will case-by-case basis with individualized attention

Children have a voice: we listen to their desires for reintegration or foster care

Kids will not experience the impact of extreme poverty because we will support families to care for children

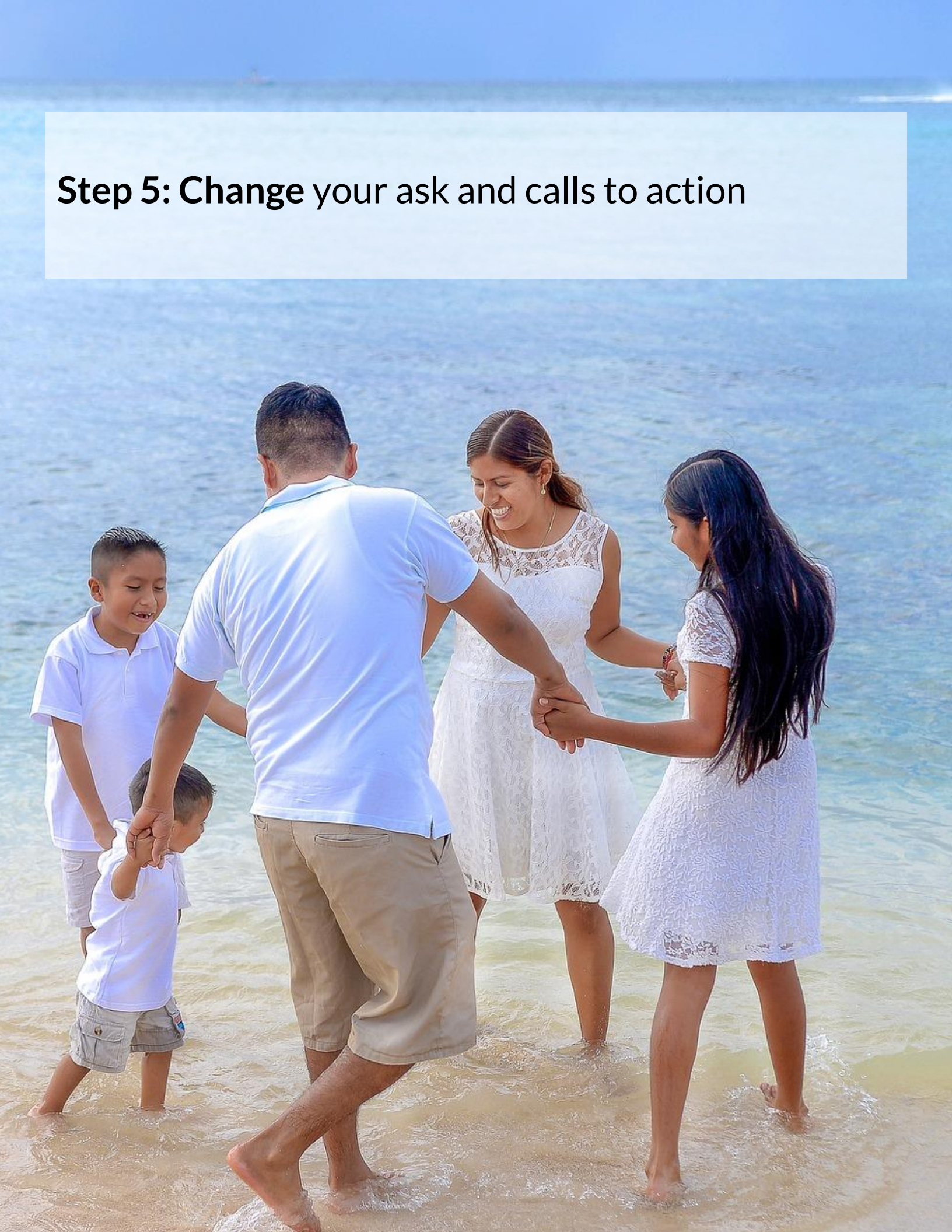
Support for children can/will continue when needed to make sure they have assistance

Reflections questions

- How much will this change to our model of care cost and why?
- How else might we bring new donors onboard?
- How will we address gaps in support?
- What questions might our donors want answered?
- What tools are we using well for communication, and what do we need to add or do differently?

In the next step, you will focus on how to change what you're asking your donors to support and the resulting call to action.

Step 5: Change your ask and calls to action



Step 5: Change your fundraising ask and calls to action

Transitioning and changing your model of care is a change in how you conduct your work, provide care, and connect with the local community.

This final step is where all your hard work gets translated into how and what you will ask your donors to support.

Your goal is to help your donors understand that you have the same purpose of caring for children but have found a better way to do it. For example, by taking this approach, we can help more children/kids and still stay true to our mission.

Developing your vision and care model depends a lot on your particular context.

It could mean closing down your residential facility and providing different services in your community to help strengthen and keep families together.

You may even change your facility into a community center, daycare or afterschool program for children who are living in families.

Since you are changing your model, you will be making a different ask and resulting call to action.

What you ask for and your call to action largely depends on your model of care which may include the following:

- Family strengthening services
- Prevention of family separation
- Family Reintegration
- Adoption
- Foster care
- Social work or other training

What's a call to action?

A call-to-action (CTA) is the request you want the recipient to perform or do as a result, such as “give today,” “call now,” “click here” and more.

Funding your new ministry model

Even though family-based care is more cost-effective long-term than residential care, the process of transition will always require additional initial investment. Why? Because you will need to continue to provide residential care for children while at the same time your other model is ramping up.

You will need to raise more funds to cover higher initial costs for your new model

You will have an overlap while children are being placed into families and your other family services are being developed. At the same time, you will be fundraising to build the operational capacity for the transition.

Help donors understand your need for additional financial support

Each step in your process of transition will involve donor communication. Changing to a family care model will change your approach with donors because you will need additional support.

Initial costs will differ for every organization, but may include:

- ☐ Securing appropriate transition coaching
- ☐ Hiring specialized staff
- ☐ Social worker training
- ☐ Retraining current staff to fill new roles
- ☐ Case management
- ☐ Travel costs for family retracing and locating biological families to see if reunification is possible
- ☐ Developing new handbooks, manuals, and policies
- ☐ Remodeling current facilities to suit new purposes

You will lay the groundwork to have a new type of partnership with your supporters by sharing research, having conversations, and raising awareness about the need for family-based care.

Also, you will invite donors to support you in new ways while you address their questions and concerns.

Special concerns

If you are using mission trips and funds raised from these trips.

Or if you are using a child sponsorship model you will have special concerns.

Read special concerns section on page 41.

Messages need to hit on multiple motivational drivers at the same time

As you worked through the steps of this guide, you will already have ideas for messaging. Consider how you will present a holistic picture with your messaging from different vantage points.

Specific messaging used to help inspire supporters to give to the new model

OVC-serving organizations we studied that inspired donors to give toward a new model of family-based care used the following messages:

- Messaging about the pilot program, “we have the same mission and found a better way to do it.”
- Messaging that you are bringing donors into an exciting new project
- Asking questions about what’s the best thing for the child?
- Sharing about other OVC organizations that have adopted a family-based care approach
- Showing that gifts go much further with the foster care program or a family strengthening program
- Focus on the donor’s part, “we cannot do this work without you.”
- Talk about disrupting generational cycles of child separation from parental care
- Cast a vision for family discipleship and community transformation through specific projects

Focus messaging to the donor-level and use words they say

Change your words to use plain language that donors will understand. Donors will not always tell you if they do not know what you mean. Take responsibility for adjusting your words and eliminating lingo and jargon that you may use in the field with colleagues and co-workers when you talk with supporters.

Create new calls to action for family-based care

The following calls to action are being used to do fundraising for OVC organizations for family-based care:

- Ask donors to redirect their gift to family-based work
- Please help us reach more children
- Help this child and support this family (keep this family together)
- Help sustain this family (and telling story about a family you can help)

Share how you are bringing donors into an exciting project

Create new programs to invite donors to support, like a scholarship program for kids aging out of care or service specific requests like the following:

- Ask for support for a guidance counselor or social workers
- Ask for help for a motorcycle for a social worker or transportation to do family retracing
- Scholarship program for kids graduating orphanage

Ask donors to redirect their gifts to family-based work

Ask “Can we redirect your donation to help these children get back with their family (be in a loving family)? Can we reframe your support to use in the future for more family-based work?”

For example, \$50 per month you can support a family vs. \$200 per mo. for a child in the orphanage

Win over converts by showing similar organizations

Share examples of similar organizations in your context that have made changes and are seeing success.

Emphasize that your decisions are driven by what’s in the best interest of the child and their future.

Help your donors understand how they can be involved

Donors have invested in your cause, and they want to help make an impact, but they need support. Your donors want to be involved, but they won’t often know how they can best help. Your job is to bring donors along and help them.

Bring donors on trips to inspire a new vision

Taking donors on trips can help you get buy-in and motivate donors to give. Use trips strategically to help donors see how helping families and communities is best to help kids. Also, re-educate donors to understand the factors behind children being in care, and that many of these children have relatives who may be able to care for them with support.

Short-term missions

Short-term missions intended to benefit vulnerable children must be approached with wisdom and caution.

Learn the principles for doing good, view alternative models, and read case studies of trips with excellent impact in [Wise Short-Term Missions](#)

Figure 5-1 Buckner Kenya

Buckner tells a compelling story of how donors help children be in families.

Calvin is an orphan, learning to sew so he can take care of himself and his siblings.

Call to Action

Your gift will bring hope to those most vulnerable

Source:

<http://www.buckner.org/kenya/>

Buckner
Hope shines here®

Kenya

Calvin is an orphan, learning to sew so he can take care of himself and his siblings. Geraldine is unable to have children yet longs for a family. Gad lives in a tiny village in a hut made of mud and sticks where his children wear torn clothing and no shoes.

They live in extreme poverty with limited support from the government. Many people Buckner serves in Kenya had to drop out of school at an early age to help support their families and now that they're adults, they're unable to support themselves. With a lack of quality education and access to medical care, they're at risk of health issues, including HIV/AIDS, birth defects, malaria and typhoid.

Kenyan culture is vibrant and alive. The people are hard-working and earnestly want better lives for themselves and their families. They just need a little help learning how to do it.

When you go to Kenya with Buckner, you'll be able to hear their stories and minister to them first-hand. People like Calvin, Geraldine and Gad will leave an indelible mark on your soul. You will pray with them and for them. It's a ministry unlike any other.

In Kenya, we provide:

Foster/kinship care
Buckner provides foster care services in Nairobi, Busia and Kitale. In most cases, foster care is really kinship care – where extended families take care of children whose parents have died or abandoned them. These family members receive financial support, food, school allowance, health care and family coaching from Buckner Kenya staff.

Domestic adoption
For the first time in the history of the country, Buckner is helping educate and facilitate adoptions of Kenyan children to Kenyan families. Buckner Kenya staff has taken the lead in the national adoption initiative, educating and helping organizations, lawmakers and top government officials. Because of their hard work, Kenyan children are finding forever family in stable, loving Christian homes instead of orphanages.

Family Hope Centers
Buckner Family Hope Centers are child-centered, family-focused places where families go to find hope, support and empowerment in their community to reach their fullest God-given potential. The key to the Family Hope Center's success is found in combining effective programs and passionate people to help families that are experiencing poverty, family issues and lack of services.

Our programs seek to engage through family assistance and community events, equip families through education, financial empowerment, child and youth development and spiritual development; elevate families through family coaching, counseling and spiritual enrichment. Family Hope Centers in Kenya also have schools, medical clinics and water wells to meet very basic needs of families who live nearby.

Do you want to make an eternal impact in the lives of people like Calvin, Geraldine and Gad? If you're ready to change the world one life at a time, visit our [trip calendar](#) to see when you can go.



Changing from child sponsorship to family reunification

Agape Children's Ministry focused their ministry on family reunification. They share, "how family reunification gives vulnerable, at-risk children the best opportunity possible to find hope and belonging with their own families."

New Call to Action: Reunite a family

For as little as \$1 a day, help reunite a vulnerable child with their family and join a community passionate about a world where every child finds love, belonging and community.

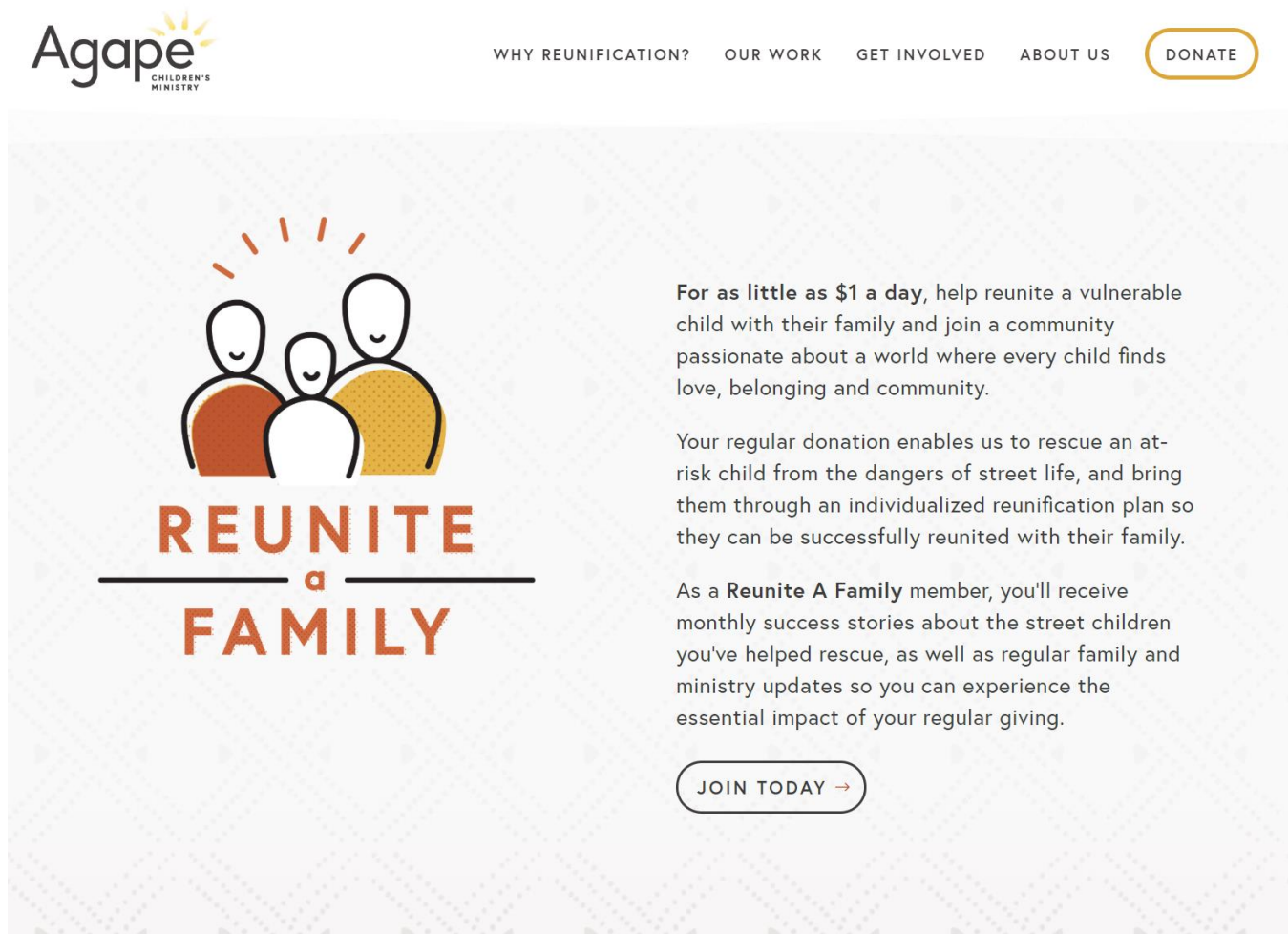
The image shows a landing page for Agape Children's Ministry's "Reunite A Family" campaign. At the top left is the Agape logo, which includes the word "Agape" in a serif font and "CHILDREN'S MINISTRY" in a smaller sans-serif font below it. To the right of the logo is a navigation bar with links: "WHY REUNIFICATION?", "OUR WORK", "GET INVOLVED", "ABOUT US", and a "DONATE" button highlighted with a yellow border. The main content area features a large graphic on the left with three stylized human figures (two adults and one child) in orange and yellow, with the text "REUNITE a FAMILY" below them. To the right of this graphic, there is a text block that reads: "For as little as \$1 a day, help reunite a vulnerable child with their family and join a community passionate about a world where every child finds love, belonging and community." Below this is another text block: "Your regular donation enables us to rescue an at-risk child from the dangers of street life, and bring them through an individualized reunification plan so they can be successfully reunited with their family." This is followed by a third text block: "As a Reunite A Family member, you'll receive monthly success stories about the street children you've helped rescue, as well as regular family and ministry updates so you can experience the essential impact of your regular giving." At the bottom right of the main content area is a "JOIN TODAY →" button.

Figure 5-2 Agape Donor Landing Page - Reunite A Family

<https://agapechildren.org/reunite/>

5 Steps to Transition Donors to Support Family-based Models

1 888.242.8352 | sponsorship@bethany.org

[MEET A FAMILY](#) | [FOR OUR CHURCHES](#) | [LOGIN](#)

Together We Can Transform the Lives of Families

FIND A FAMILY

Country: Family Size: Children Age: Family's Name (if known):

[SEARCH](#)

Anisa Mohammed Family

[View Family](#)

[SPONSOR THIS FAMILY](#)

[View Family Report](#)

We live in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

[View Family](#)

WHY SPONSOR A FAMILY?

You can help change the life of your sponsored family forever. For \$35 a month, you join with other sponsors to keep this struggling family together so their children grow up in a safe and loving home. As a group of sponsors, you each have a share in providing your sponsored family with essentials such as food, shelter, and the support of a dedicated caseworker. Together, you also equip grateful parents with the resources, life skills, and vocational training they need to lead their family from poverty to self-sufficiency.

Soon after you sign up, you will receive a welcome kit that introduces you to each member of your sponsored family, including family photos, information about their community, and an introduction to the caseworker who will support the family. You will receive regular updates about your sponsored family's progress, like their income, how they are doing in school, and how they are doing in life. You can connect and stay close to your sponsored family throughout the year.

FAQ

Q: How do I know that my family will be helped?

A: You can have confidence that your gift makes a difference because a caseworker is assigned to help every sponsored family. The caseworker works directly with your sponsored family to understand their situation and design a unique plan that helps them reach their goals. The caseworker closely monitors your family's progress and will post regular reports online so you can follow the progress. We'll send you an email when your latest progress report arrives.

Q: Why do families have more than one sponsor?

A: Bethany's focus is on tailoring effective solutions that meet a particular family's unique needs. As a result, each family is matched with the required number of sponsors needed to help keep the family together and step out of poverty on the path to self-sufficiency.

Q: What makes Bethany's Family Sponsorship unique?

A: While most sponsorship programs pool funds to benefit a whole community, Bethany's focus is on tailoring effective solutions that meet a particular family's unique needs. In addition, a dedicated caseworker monitors your sponsored family's progress and will provide regular reports so you will know the difference you are making.

Q: Can I name my sponsored family?

A: Yes, you can. Families love to hear from their sponsors. We'll send you a welcome kit that will make it easy to communicate with your sponsored family. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call us.

INTRODUCING FAMILY SPONSORSHIP

[View Family](#)

SPONSOR THIS FAMILY

[View Family](#)

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Instagram](#)

Bethany Christian Services
501 Eastern Ave NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
(616) 276-4000

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[Bethany](#) [United Way](#) [Goodwill](#) [Boys & Girls](#) [Operation](#)

One of our member organizations

Figure 5-3 Bethany Global

Bethany introduces family sponsorship.

You can help change the life of your sponsored family forever.

For \$35 a month, you join with other sponsors to keep this struggling family together, so their children grow up in a safe and loving home.

Call to Action
Together We Can Transform the Lives of Families

Source:
<https://www.bethany.org/global/family-sponsorship>

Reflections questions

- How can we develop a different fundraising model that does not rely on children being in the orphanage?
- What changes will you make in your messaging language to make it understandable to donors?
- Are you ready to potentially lose some donors as you change your model while getting new donors that want kids in families?
- How might short-term teams -often used to cultivate financial partners- need to look different now as you prioritize the well-being of children?



Conclusion

In this guide, we followed how organizations brought donors along on their journey to family-based care and walked through these steps together:

1. **Share** your learning about family-based care
2. **Segment** and map donors with empathy
3. **Identify** and share your most potent stories
4. **Build** your donor communication plan
5. **Change** your fundraising ask and calls to action

The journey to transition donors can feel a lot like climbing a mountain. However, you are not alone. You are following the steps and guidance of others who have gone before you and we are walking with you.

Now, it's your turn.

We pray that you will feel inspired and strengthened as you apply the steps to help transition your supporters and create the financial capacity you need to care for vulnerable children and families.



Special Concerns



Special Concerns

For many organizations serving OVC through residential care, income generated from short-term mission trips or child sponsorship provides a significant portion of operational funds. Although these tools may be useful in fundraising, they are not always in the best interest of vulnerable children. Changing these practices, as well as transition more broadly, can become more challenging if you are working with church partners or need to find new donors. We will provide brief guidance here, as well as point you in the right direction of more information.

In this section, we will touch on the following special concerns:

- Short term missions
- Child Sponsorship
- Get new donors and additional support
- Church partners

Short Term Mission Trips

Educating donors and volunteers about changes in short-term missions takes time and gentleness.

Share how the relationship with kids will change

In family-based care, donors won't be able to have the same connection or interaction with kids and can experience feeling disappointed or a sense of loss.

Kids are no longer living in a center, and they will be living with a family. It will be different because you cannot assume you can knock on the family's door and play with their kids.

For this reason, supporters experience many emotions during the transition. The biggest concerns are often will "my kid" be ok? Alternatively, "why can't we come and visit that child?"

Wise Short-term missions

Read about principles, alternative models, and case studies that will help you improve your STM model

[Wise Short-Term Missions](#)

Explain why you are doing teams and missions differently

Donors may not realize that the children have a family. They may not know that repeated, temporary relationship building with multiple strangers can damage trust and attachment in ways that can only be seen over time. They may be unaware that volunteers entering the home space of OVC may place children at risk, even if it is unintended.

Show them a better way

Change volunteer activities to support the families and communities that care for kids long-term. For example, one member transformed their residential center into an after-school program and now invites donors to go and visit the children at the former center. Donors can visit with the kids and have a positive experience while being part of a child's protection.

Engage donors, if they want to be more involved, as a volunteer based on their expertise

You may have donors who are social workers, therapists, doctors, technicians. As your needs change, you will no longer have donors painting walls of the orphanage but refocus their energy on ways they can build up the families and communities that care for kids long-term.

Supporters feel an attachment to buildings and places

Donors are emotionally attached to structures and locations. If you have a major donor with their family name on the building, they will likely have a significant attachment. Part of your transition plan needs to answer how your building will serve a new purpose. Some have turned their buildings into community centers, schools, counseling offices, or other services that strengthen families and communities. Donors want to be part of the conversation as you are making changes, especially significant donors. Sometimes you might need to say goodbye to donors who aren't willing to support your transition.

Child sponsorship

OVC-serving organizations with child sponsorship models may have the highest risk of losing donors due to relationship change with family-based care.

Donors may be emotional about changes that affect the relationship with a child they sponsor, especially if they have a child's picture on their refrigerator with other loved ones. Often supporters identify with the child and may even feel a quasi-parent-child relationship. It feels like a significant loss.

Some organizations have shifted their child sponsorship models to towards family support or expanding their care model to include child and family reunification.

Be gentle as you're talking about changes with supporters.

As humans, we are wired to avoid loss. Behavioral economics describes this feeling of [loss aversion](#) as people's tendency to prefer avoiding a loss more than acquiring equivalent or more significant gains.

Again, practice empathy.

As you work through the steps we've outlined in this guide, you will be better prepared to help donors on the journey.

Accept that losing some donors due to family-based care is usual and expected

Despite your efforts and education, you are likely to lose some donors as part of any transition. Some donors may wish to have an investment in buildings and kids living there. Other donors locked into the status quo of "my kids" and don't want to see the change. You might need to say goodbye to donors who are no longer aligned with the mission of your program.

If you have a child sponsorship model, you will need a new call to action if you refocus on family support or reunification. Go back to review the call to action examples listed on page 34.

How might you develop a different fundraising call to action that is not child sponsorship?

Next, we'll cover how to find new donors who are aligned and support family-based care.

Get new donors and additional support

Even though family-based care is more cost-effective long-term than residential care, the process of transition will likely require an investment beyond your current budget.

You will still need to raise more funds to cover the higher initial costs for keeping existing operations for children who currently in your care as you change your model.

The fastest way to raise funds is to go to people who already know you, support you, or have given in the past.

Additionally, you will need to replace donors lost. You want to attract donors who will have more passion for getting kids into families (and preventing separation in the first place).

So where do you find new donors? Is there a list somewhere? Unfortunately, no. Growing your donor base requires ongoing, consistent effort.

However, by following the steps in this guide, you already are well on your way to attracting and getting new donors. Here are tips to help you find and reach new donors:

Build your list of potential donors

You have a list from step 2 of this guide on donor segmentation. Your list of donors and potential donors will likely include:

- Board members
- Lapsed/inactive donors
- Current Donors
- New prospects and newsletter subscribers
- Referrals from current donors
- Friends and volunteers
- Churches

Asking for additional support

Ask supporters to give again. Do they donate annually; can they change to monthly or quarterly? Also, ask donors for project-based help or more substantial one-time gifts.

Seek assistance from your board

Your board does many things to support your organization and your mission. Are you sure you are engaging their fullest capacity?

Your board members may have friends or business contacts. Ask them if they would be willing to make further introductions so you can share your story and find new donors. Referrals are powerful because you benefit from the trust your board member already has with the person they are introducing you too.

Help friends share your story

This tip is like getting help from your board. Your friends, supporters, and volunteers have networks of people already.

Ask friends, supporters, and volunteers to share your story with their church or network.

- Can they share a story about you on social media with their friends?
- Create templates and resources that friends can pass on to their friends or make email introductions
- Share gratitude - Highlight friends and donors who went above and beyond in your communications
- Be thankful - Do your friends and supporters get thanks for their support beyond an annual thank you letter and tax receipt?

Make it easy to share your story

When someone shares something in their newsfeed, it might spark others in their network to learn more about you and your mission and support your work.

The communication plan we covered on page 23

Make your website a top priority

Your supporters and potential donors will learn much about your organization online.

Do you make it easy for supporters to find out about your cause and give online? If not, put your focus on how you will move people from reading your website to give their donation.

[Watch](#) and learn how to apply empathy to inspire donors to give online.

Go back and review the calls to action examples and websites featured on pages 35 to 37 for inspiration.

You want to make sure you are also including calls to action that capture your visitor's email addresses.

Email Fundraising Optimization:

This is a free course to help teach you strategies that will help you increase email donations for your organization.

[Click here to access](#)



Donation and Landing Page Optimization:

Free 8-session course, that will help you discover 4 core types of landing pages and donation pages that are essential to growing your online fundraising. [Click here to access](#)



For additional free online fundraising training for nonprofits visit: <https://courses.nextafter.com/>

Church partners

The church can be the most difficult to get buy-in because they include multiple people, personalities, levels of authority and responsibility that aren't always aligned.

Due to these factors, the cycle to help transition these donors to give to a new model of care is challenging.

Find your champion within the church

You feel this person “gets it.” They may already be an advocate, supporter, or volunteer. They have passion and energy for family-based work but may not have decision-making power.

This person may have already stood in front of the church and asked for money to support you, volunteered, or enlisted others to volunteer for your organization. They are your ally to help get buy-in at the church.

Coach your champion inside the church and take them on the journey

Equip your champion on how to go about getting buy-in. To do this, you will help your champion go on the journey of steps 1 - 5 just like you did. Tailor it for their situation. You can also share this guide with them.

Put together materials and talking points that they need to help educate their members, team, and staff. Help them by sharing stories.

Slow down and be patient because it takes time

Realize that the church won't always be on the same page as you. They need time to understand and get buy-in together. Give them education and resource to make the mindset shift.

The OVC-serving organizations we interviewed found that rushing conversations and decisions did not go well. It is a process to win converts.






Several members used the phrase, “we needed to slow down to speed up”. Slow down and be patient.











Resources for Further Exploration

Resources for Further Exploration



Appendix 1: Need for Family Care

-  [Children, Orphanages, and Families](#) - A Summary of Research to Help Guide Faith-Based Action
-  [Exploring the Continuum of Care](#) - Resources, infographic, video, tools and for care options
-  [Gatekeeping](#) - Reducing Unnecessary Entry into Alternative Care hosted by CAFO
-  [Families, Not Orphanages](#) - Series of white papers from Better Care Network for family care
-  [Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children](#) - created by UNICEF and the United Nations


Appendix 2: Fundraising resources

-  [The God Ask](#) - A Fresh, Biblical Approach to Personal Support Raising book by Steve Shadrach
-  [Fields of Gold \(Generous Giving\)](#) -book by Andy Stanley
-  [Mission Increase Foundation](#) - Free resources and consulting at no cost to ministries
-  [Support Raising Solutions](#) - biblical/practical support raising training for Christian workers
-  [How Empathy Can Inspire Your Donors to Take Action](#) - digital fundraising tips to inspire giving
-  [The Fundraising Authority](#) - resources for 11 fundraising experts
-  [The fundraising coach](#) - resources and guidance for fundraising
-  [NextAfter](#) - Free digital fundraising research and courses based on 1,381 unique experiments

Appendix 3: Transitioning to family-based model

-  CAFO2019 Summit - [Family Preservation & Reintegration Track](#)
-  [Transitioning to Family Care for Children: A Guidance Manual](#) - via Faith to Action Initiative


 [Replicable Models for Transition to Family-Based Care](#) – Real-world case studies by CAFO


 [Replicable Models for Transition to Family-Based Care](#) – Learn how to transition your model

 [Kinected](#) – ACCIR website resources and videos related to transitioning.

 [Donor Frequently Asked Questions](#) - useful guidance for answering donor questions

Appendix 4: Getting buy-in

 [A World Without Orphans](#) - documentary to share with the board, advisory council, and donors

 [The Magical Science of Storytelling](#) – TED Talk on how to tell more emotionally engaging stories

 [Friedman's Theory of Differentiated Leadership Made Simple](#) – addressing resistance to change

Transitioning Donors Checklist

Use this checklist to track your progress as you advance through the five steps to transitioning donors and increase your chances of transition success. Ask yourself the following questions:

Step 1: Share your learning about family-based care with donors

- ☐ Are you researching how other OVC organizations in your context changed the model of care?
- ☐ Have you gathered research, articles, videos, or stories about family-based care to share?
- ☐ Do you have positive stories about organizations who changed their model for your context?
- ☐ Have you met or talked with other OVC leaders who have transitioned to a family-based model?
- ☐ Are you looking at local laws and compliance angles for your specific context?
- ☐ Do you feel prepared to share your thinking about family-based care with donors?
- ☐ Have you started to provide information as early as you can to key donors about family care?
- ☐ Are you ready to call/meet with key donors to share your story and early vision?
- ☐ Will you be ready to share how kids want to be with families or family reunification stories?
- ☐ Have you begun to update emails and social media content with stories on family-based care?

Step 2: Segment and map donors with empathy

- ☐ Have you reviewed your donor list and recent giving?
- ☐ Do you know who your champions are in your donor base?
- ☐ Are you applying empathy to know donor motivations for giving better?
- ☐ Have you built an empathy map for each donor segment?
- ☐ Are you observing and noting the differences in donor motivations with your fundraising?
- ☐ Do you know the personalities of your donors, board members, and staff?
- ☐ Have you considered how to target fundraising messages differently for each segment as you transition?

Step 3: Identify and share your most potent stories

- ☐ Have you started to gather stories to share with your stakeholders?
- ☐ Are you using brainstorming and memory recall (people, places, and things) to capture impact stories?
- ☐ Do you have a catalog of your most potent stories organized for you to be ready to share?
- ☐ Are you prepared to share stories that support your vision and why you are changing?
- ☐ Have you considered how else you might inspire donors around your vision with emotional stories?

Step 4: Build your donor communication plan

- ☐ Have you written out why your model is changing and how it is better for kids?
- ☐ Do you know your numbers for the expected costs for the transition?
- ☐ Have you determined your fundraising goals with additional transition costs?
- ☐ Have you crafted your communications plan for each donor segment?
- ☐ Are you clear about the channels you will use to communicate and the messages you will say?
- ☐ Have you created your communication calendar with your plan for the next 12-months?
- ☐ Did you build your conversation guide or talking points for sharing with donors?

Step 5: Change your fundraising ask and calls to action

- ☐ Have you created new calls to action that support family-based care?
- ☐ Are you ready to ask donors to redirect their gift to family-based work and make additional gifts?
- ☐ Have you developed a fundraising model that does not depend on children being in the orphanage?
- ☐ Do your messages help donors understand your need for additional financial support and why?
- ☐ Do you have clarity about short-term teams and how they will or need to change?
- ☐ Are you messaging donors using language they'll understand?
- ☐ Have you made your calls to action clear so your donors understand how they can be involved?
- ☐ Are you prepared to lose some donors as you change your model while getting new donors?

Transitioning Donors

Bringing supporters with you
on the journey to a new model

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