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NICK KOLENDA

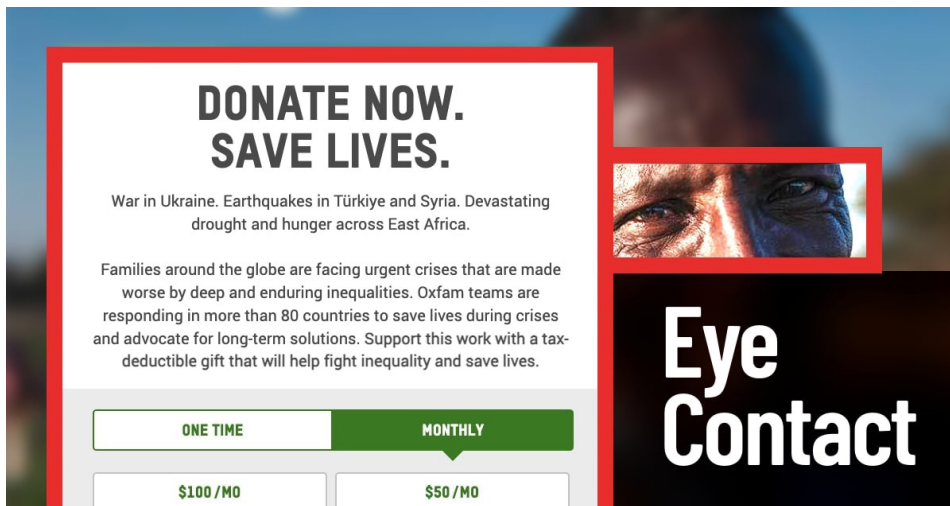
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1

NONPROFITS



MAKE DONORS FEEL SELF-AWARE AND VISIBLE

People donate more money when they believe that other people are watching.

Humans perform “good” behaviors when other people are watching.

In a classic study, people donated more money when they were standing near an image of eyes (vs. flowers; Bateson et al., 2006).

Want more donations? Make them visible.

HOW TO APPLY

→ **Stare at Donors.** Save the Children shows a child staring at users on their donation page.

(see fig 1)

→ **Look Into the Video Camera.** Speak directly to viewers in donation videos.

(see fig 2)

→ **Make Eye Contact With Donors.** Solicitors receive more money when they look people in the eye (vs. a donation bin; Bull & Gibson-Robinson, 1981).

(see fig 3)

→ **Break the 3rd Wall.** In a LoveShriners commercial, a boy looks into the camera and shouts “Hi People.” It feels like you’re talking to the boy, especially because of the Zoom-like interface. Naturally, he will see your decision whether to donate or ignore him.

(see fig 4)

→ **Be Liberal With “You” Pronouns.** UNICEF frames their copy around potential donors. Your copy should follow a similar strategy. For example, the previous sentence said “your copy” – which paints a mental image in which you are the protagonist. All eyes are on you.

(see fig 5)

→ **Insert White Backgrounds in Interfaces.** White resembles light, which makes the intended action feel

more visible. On the donation page for Doctors Without Borders, the interface and donation form are white. And there's a dark background image with the beneficiary. Research shows that dark images appear heavy, and heavy objects seem important (Jostmann et al., 2009).

(see fig 6)

→ **Use See-Through Donation Bins.** Opaque bins hide contributions. Transparent bins will show existing contributions, so people will conceptualize this behavior as a social norm. They'll feel guiltier not donating.

(see fig 7)

→ **Display Handwritten Fonts on Donation Requests.** If humans can't be present to witness a donation, leave remnants of a human. People insert

more money into donation boxes with handwritten fonts (Chu et al., 2023).

(see fig 8)

→ **Embrace Organic Shapes in Branding.** On the Save the Children website, the Search and Menu icons look drawn by hand, rather than digitally created. Handmade designs should activate more social presence.

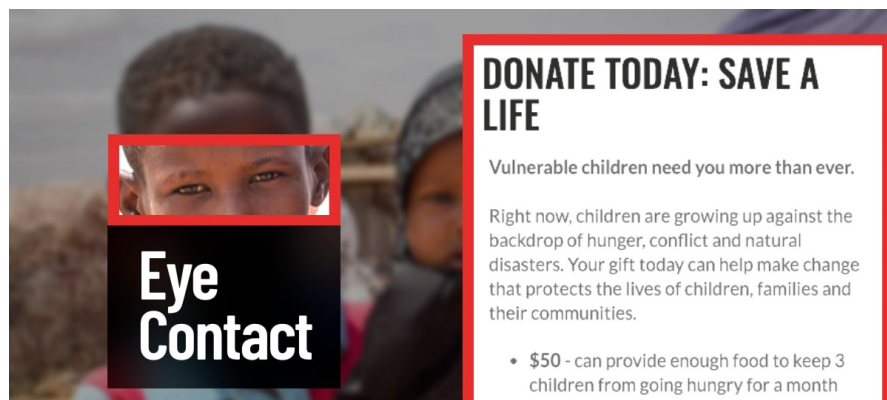
(see fig 9)

Bateson, M., Nettle, D., & Roberts, G. (2006). Cues of being watched enhance cooperation in a real-world setting. *Biology letters*, 2(3), 412-414.

Bull, R., & Gibson-Robinson, E. (1981). The influences of eye-gaze, style of dress, and locality on the amounts of money donated to a charity. *Human Relations*, 34(10), 895-905.

Chu, X. Y., Tok, D., Zhou, X., & Chen, X. (2023). How companies use typeface design to engage consumers in charitable activities. *Psychology & Marketing*, 40(1), 107-123.

Jostmann, N. B., Lakens, D., & Schubert, T. W. (2009). Weight as an embodiment of importance. *Psychological science*, 20(9), 1169-1174.



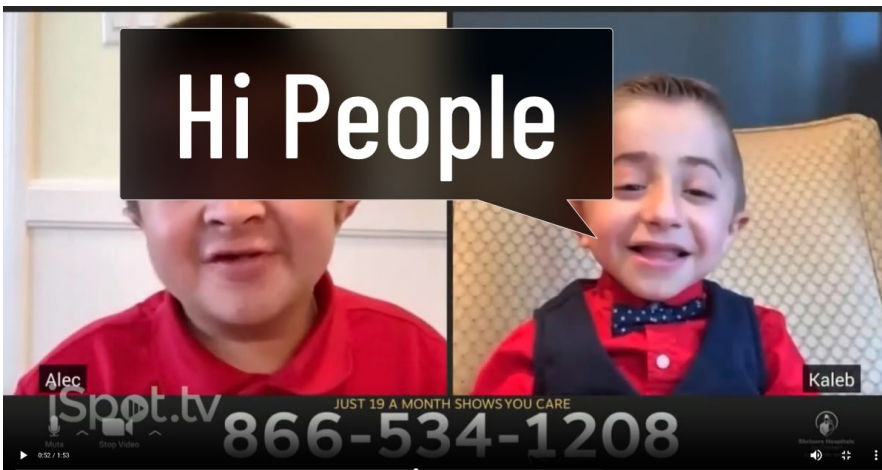
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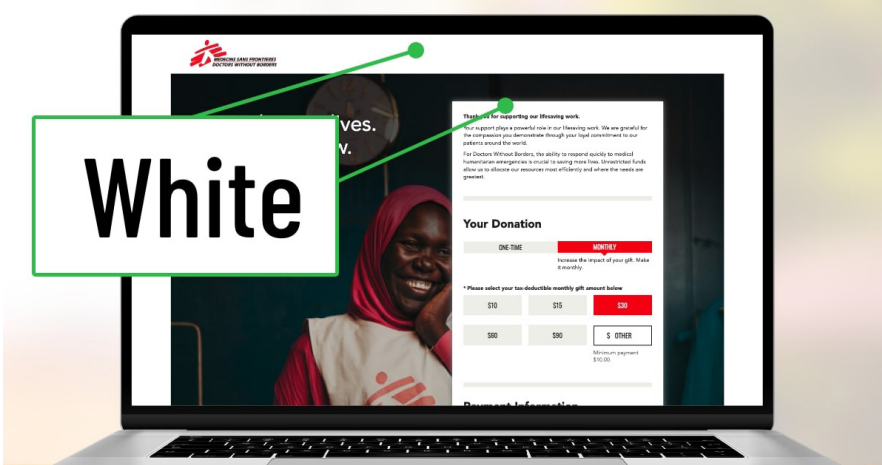


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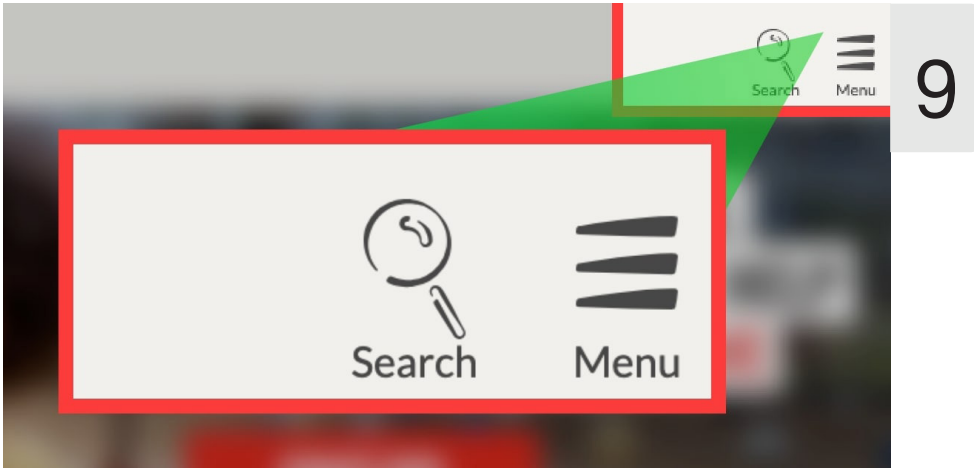
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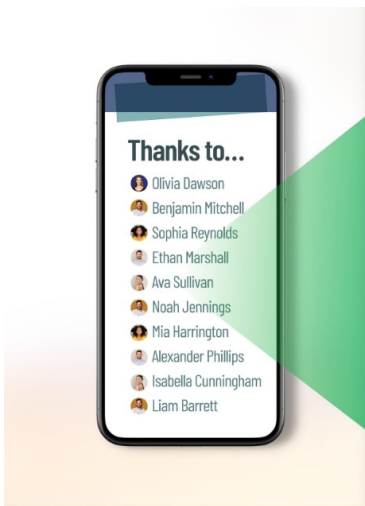


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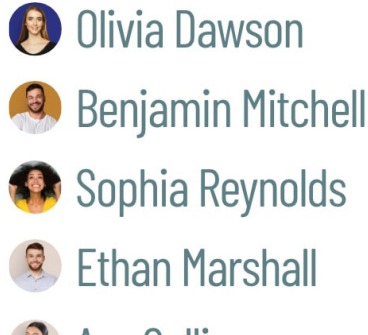


8





Thanks to...



PUBLICIZE ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL DONORS

Recognition is a key driver of charitable behavior.

Most donors want to help.

But all donors want to be *seen* helping (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011).

HOW TO APPLY

→ **Enshrine the Names of Donors.** Donors want other people to see their name. During telethons, viewers are more likely to donate during moments when donor names are being shown (Silverman et al., 1984).

(see fig 1)

→ **Illuminate Prospective Donors.** A crowdfunding website could show people who visited the campaign. That way, their lack of donation will be visible.

(see fig 2)

→ Ask People Whether to Publicize Their Donation.

It makes them consider their “leadership” qualities, which elicits a larger donation: “giving people the option to report their contributions results in more giving than required reporting...empowering people with the choice to announce their contributions — even though it is a “false” choice that no one would reject — might actually focus them more on being leaders and example setters” (Andreoni & Petrie, 2004, p. 1620-1621)

(see fig 3)

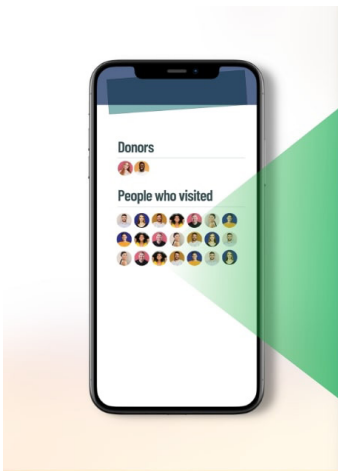
Andreoni, J., & Petrie, R. (2004). Public goods experiments without confidentiality: a glimpse into fund-raising. *Journal of public Economics*, 88(7-8), 1605-1623.

Bekkers, R., & Wiepking, P. (2011). A literature review of empirical studies of philanthropy: Eight mechanisms that drive charitable giving. *Nonprofit and voluntary sector quarterly*, 40(5), 924-973.

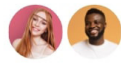
Silverman, W. K., Robertson, S. J., Middlebrook, J. L., & Drabman, R. S. (1984). An investigation of pledging behavior to a national charitable telethon. *Behavior Therapy*, 15(3), 304-311.



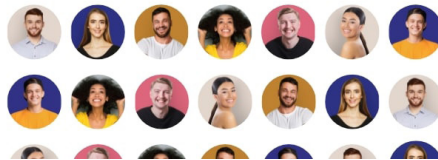
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Donors



People who visited



2

Can we add you to our donor page?

No

Yes

3



BALANCE DONATIONS WITH MISDEEDS OR ENRICHMENT

People feel obligated to donate if they're reminded of a past misdeed or success.

People want to balance their decisions.

I designed this framework:

(see fig 1)

It has four behaviors:

1. **Obligation**- You do something good
2. **Misdeed**: You do something bad
3. **Enrichment**: You receive something good
4. **Mishap** - You receive something bad.

Your behaviors tilt the scale left or right. You then desire an opposing behavior for balance (see my book *The Tangled Mind*).

Donations are *obligations*, so they tilt right.

Try reminding people of a past misdeed or enrichment to slant their scale left. This imbalance will drive them toward an obligation (e.g., donation) to regain balance.

HOW TO APPLY

→ **Remind Them of a Misdeed.** An environmental charity could ask donors if they failed to recycle something recently. People will be able to absolve this misdeed by donating now.

→ **Request Donations From “Successful” People.** Set an *egotistic trap*. In one study, people were more willing to complete a survey if they learned that researchers needed intelligent people; suddenly they wanted to participate to validate their intelligence (Dolinski et al., 2023). Perhaps a charity could seek donations from “successful” people so that potential donors can validate their identity as a successful person.

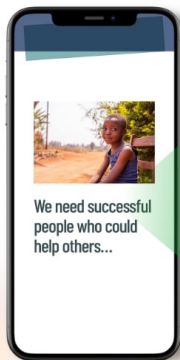
(see fig 2)

→ **Compare Donations to a Cheap Emotional Product.** People were more likely to donate \$2 when it was compared to a popular cookie (vs. bar of soap) because people felt guilty not donating (Savary et al., 2015).

(see fig 3)

Behaviors need **balance**

1



We need successful people who could help others...

2

\$5

\$10

\$25

3

*The price of a **latte**.*



HUMANIZE BENEFICIARIES

Donors feel more empathy toward relatable beneficiaries.

We empathize with people, not statistics.

In a classic study, people were more likely to donate \$5 to an African girl named Rokia (vs. “millions of people”; Small et al., 2007).

HOW TO APPLY

→ **Give Personal Details.** More details? More empathy. In one study, people donated money to a sick child in direct proportion to the amount of personal details they received (e.g., name, age, photo; Kogut & Ritov, 2005).

(see fig 1)

→ **Describe How Beneficiaries Have Been Successful.** Should beneficiaries appear helpless? Wouldn't donors feel *more* obligated to help? Ironically, no. People help beneficiaries that seem successful because these beneficiaries seem more agentic, as if they control their behavior. And this trait makes them appear more human (Formanowicz et al., 2023).

Therefore, describe how beneficiaries have applied past donations. What did they accomplish? Humanize them, while demonstrating the efficacy of donating.

(see fig 2)

→ Show Beneficiaries Helping Themselves.

Likewise, people want to see images of beneficiaries engaged in physical labor: Show photos of beneficiaries physically acting to resolve an unfortunate situation to inspire and motivate donors (Perez et al., 2023)

(see fig 3)

Formanowicz, M., Witkowska, M., Bettinsoli, M. L., & Jurek, P. (2023). Successful groups are seen as more agentic and therefore more human—Consequences for group perception. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 108, 104490.

Kogut, T., & Ritov, I. (2005). The “identified victim” effect: An identified group, or just a single individual?. *Journal of behavioral decision making*, 18(3), 157-167.

Perez, D., Munichor, N., & Buskila, G. (2023). Help yourself: Pictures of donation recipients engaged in physical self-help enhance donations on crowdfunding platforms. *Journal of Business Research*, 161, 113826.

Small, D. A., Loewenstein, G., & Slovic, P. (2007). Sympathy and callousness: The impact of deliberative thought on donations to identifiable and statistical victims. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 102(2), 143-153.

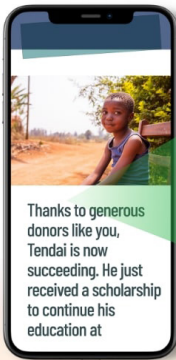


Tendai Chirwa

Age: 8

Likes: dancing, playing

1

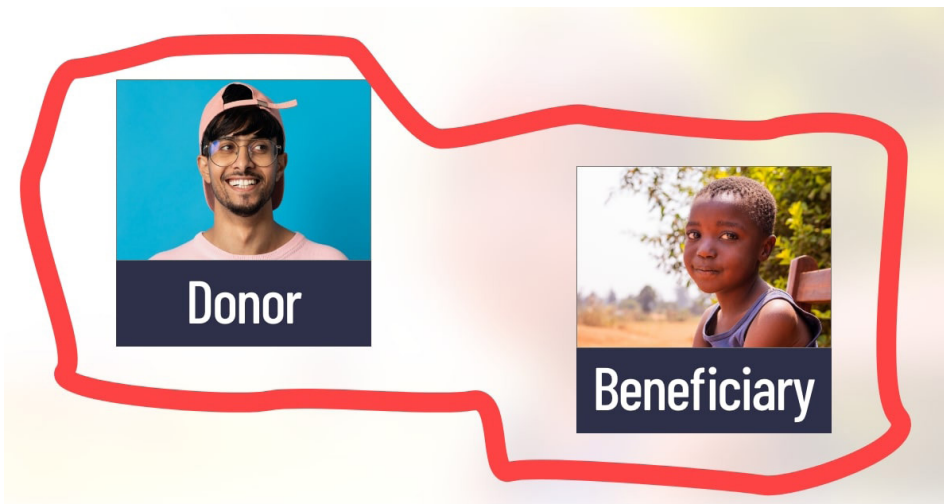


**"With your help,
Tendai received a
scholarship..."**

2



3



GROUP DONORS WITH BENEFICIARIES

Donors feel more empathy toward beneficiaries if they belong to the same ingroup.

Grouping underlies empathy.

In the past, I've argued that *gestalt principles of grouping* – similarity, proximity, containment – are key drivers of empathy: If you group yourself with another person, your brain will blur your identities. Subconsciously, you feel compelled to help this person because it feels like you're helping yourself (see my book *The Tangled Mind*).

HOW TO APPLY

→ **Describe Similarities.** We help people who resemble us — e.g., people donated more money to beneficiaries with a similar first name (Bekkers, 2010).

(see fig 1)

→ **Describe a Nearby Location.** If somebody dies across the world, you don't blink an eye. But if somebody dies across the street, suddenly it feels impactful. Indeed, people donate to beneficiaries that seem physically closer to them (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2017).

→ **Establish Localized Offices.** Local donations seem more effective because people confuse their sensory experience: "...a snowball thrown from 10 feet away will hurt more than one thrown from 50 feet away... [likewise] people expect charitable donations to have a greater impact on nearby (vs. faraway) recipients" (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2017).

→ **Broaden Locales to Include Donors.** Suppose that a disaster is sweeping across Oregon. A resident of Washington (which is next to Oregon) will feel protected because the geographic border feels like a rigid border (Mishra & Mishra, 2010). Need donations from nearby states? Broaden the locale (e.g., say "northwest" instead of "Oregon") so that you merge donors into the same group.

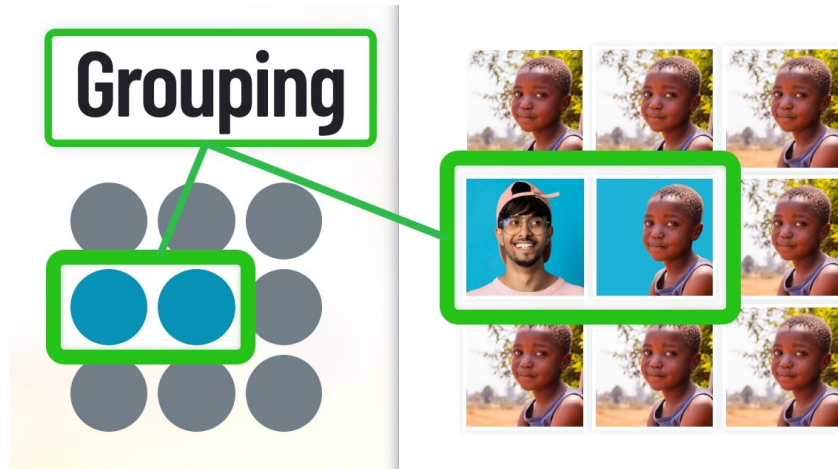
→ **Emphasize Their Geographic Mobility.** People are more likely to donate to distant causes if they moved geographically at least once in their life (Wang et al., 2021). Moving helps you identify with distant people. You are no longer a resident of California; you are a resident of the world.

Bekkers, R. H. (2010). George gives to geology Jane: The name letter effect and incidental similarity cues in fundraising. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 15(2), 172-180.

Mishra, A., & Mishra, H. (2010). Border bias: The belief that state borders can protect against disasters. *Psychological science*, 21(11), 1582-1586.

Touré-Tillery, M., & Fishbach, A. (2017). Too far to help: The effect of perceived distance on the expected impact and likelihood of charitable action. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 112(6), 860.

Wang, Y., Kirmani, A., & Li, X. (2021). Not too far to help: Residential mobility, global identity, and donations to distant beneficiaries. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 47(6), 878-889.



1



MERGE BENEFICIARIES INTO A UNIT

Isolated beneficiaries will dilute donations.

Donations can feel diluted.

Donating \$1.00 to help “millions of people” implies that each person will receive \$0.000001. Which can’t help anybody.

Instead, group beneficiaries into a unit. It’s similar to the *denomination effect* in which one \$20 bill feels more important than twenty \$1 bills (Raghubir & Srivastava, 2009).

HOW TO APPLY

→ **Merge Isolated Areas Into the Broader Region.** Save the Children emphasizes the country of Sudan rather than the individual areas.

(see fig 1)

(see fig 2)

→ **Show Beneficiaries From the Same Family.** Participants were more likely to donate money to six children in Africa when they were told these children belonged to the same family (Smith et al., 2013).

(see fig 3)





Raghubir, P., & Srivastava, J. (2009). The denomination effect. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36(4), 701-713.

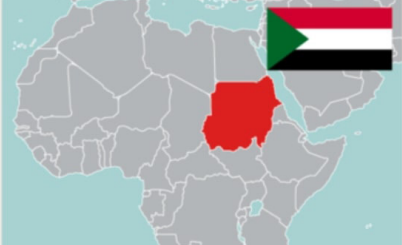
Smith, R. W., Faro, D., & Burson, K. A. (2013). More for the many: The influence of entitativity on charitable giving. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39(5), 961-976.



Challenges for Children in Sudan

Children in Sudan continue to be hardest hit by conflict, exacerbated by extreme poverty, natural disasters and disease. Violence, including attacks on schools, have contributed to a disproportionate number of Sudanese girls being out of school.

-  1 child in 16 dies before their 5th birthday, 9 times the U.S. rate
-  38% of children suffer from stunting due to malnutrition
-  48% of children are out of school, and 44% of girls (ages 15+) struggle to read and write
-  22% of girls (ages 15-19) are married, and 1 in 16 gives birth



2





\$100 toward hygiene



\$100 provides a hygiene kit to 20 families

DESCRIBE THE TANGIBLE OUTCOME OF DONATIONS

Specify how their donation will be used.

Help donors see the impact of their donation.

Researchers compared two charities:

- **UNICEF** - Funds projects for children's health
- **SPN** - Buys bed nets to stop the spread of malaria

Donors felt happier with SPN because of the tangible outcome (Aknin et al., 2013).

Donations feel most gratifying when they *alleviate a negative impact*.

For example, researchers categorized the valence of 5,000 donation appeals from a television station:

- **Positive:** "Tried and true television."
- **Negative:** "Government funding has been cut \$20 million"

They also categorized who would receive the benefit:

- **Self:** "Enjoy the best in commercial-free films"
- **Other:** "Support our educational children's shows"

Only one combination was effective: Negative appeals that affected other people (Fisher et al., 2008).

(see fig 1)

In fact, appealing to viewers backfired:

When the fund-raising appeals focused on the personal or selfish benefits associated with contributing to the station, the donation became a payment in exchange for commercial-free entertainment rather than an act of giving. This type of donation does not have the same potential to enhance self-esteem (Fisher et al., 2008)

HOW TO APPLY

→ **Let Donors Choose the Purpose of Their Donation.** Save the Children offers tangible outcomes across donation tiers. In a field study with 40,000 donors, a charity boosted revenue by 42 percent when they followed a similar approach (Esterzon et al., 2023).

(see fig 2)

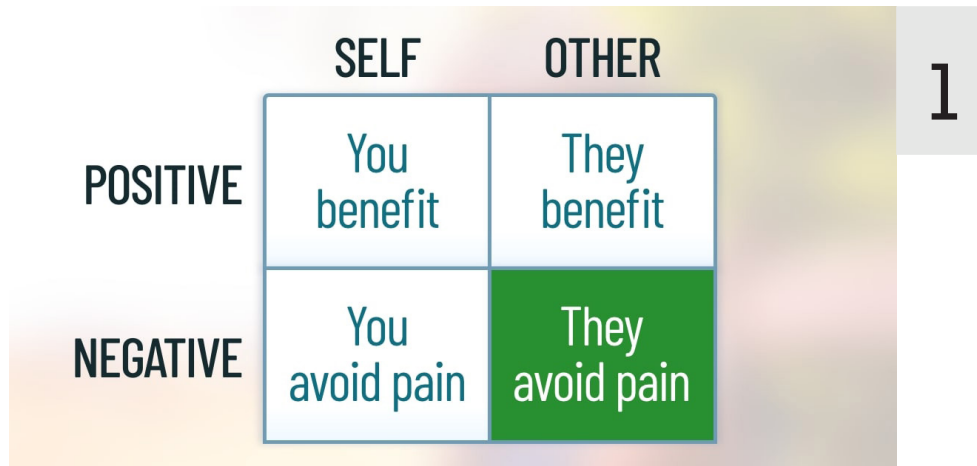
→ **Show the Journey of a Donation.** Charity: Water produced a video that illustrates how they're able to extract maximum impact from each donation.

(see fig 3)

Aknin, L. B., Dunn, E. W., Whillans, A. V., Grant, A. M., & Norton, M. I. (2013). Making a difference matters: Impact unlocks the emotional benefits of prosocial spending. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 88, 90-95.

Esterzon, E., Lemmens, A., & Van den Bergh, B. (2023). Enhancing Donor Agency to Improve Charitable Giving: Strategies and Heterogeneity. *JOURNAL OF MARKETING*.

Fisher, R. J., Vandenbosch, M., & Antia, K. D. (2008). An empathy-helping perspective on consumers' responses to fund-raising appeals. *Journal of consumer research*, 35(3), 519-531.



\$50 can provide enough food to keep 3 children

\$150 can wrap 30 warm, cozy blankets around

\$300 can provide 150 face masks to refugee health workers on the front lines

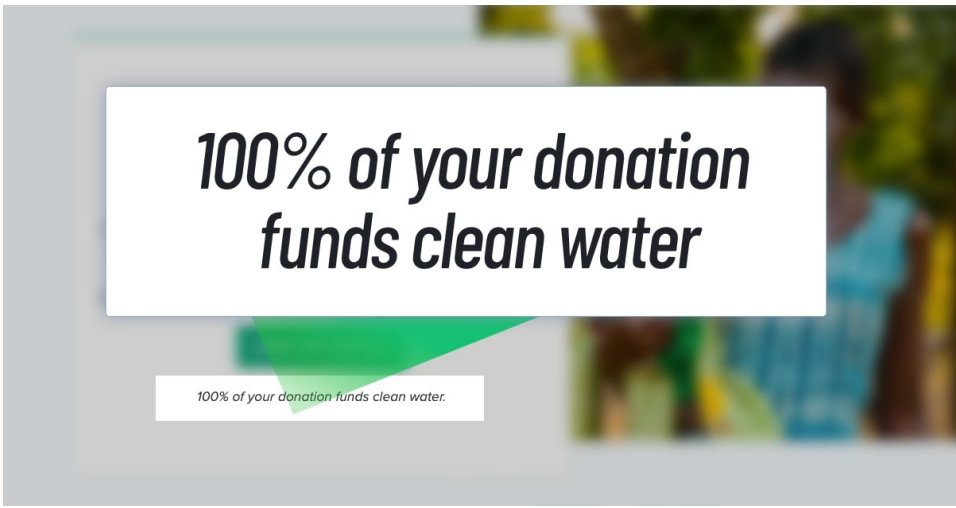
- \$50 can provide enough food to keep 3 children
- \$150 can wrap 30 warm, cozy blankets around
- \$300 can provide 150 face masks to refugee health workers on the front lines

THE JOURNEY OF YOUR DONATION

AN UPDATE FROM CHARITY: WATER

The Journey of Your Donation

Watch this video to see how your donation turns into water, sanitation, and hygiene resources that transform entire communities and impact more people than you know.



*100% of your donation
funds clean water*

100% of your donation funds clean water.

SEND DONATIONS DIRECTLY TO BENEFICIARIES

Donors want their contributions to make a meaningful difference in people's lives.

Donors want to feed hungry children.

They don't want to pay executives.

Therefore, tell donors that you paid overhead costs with a separate donation.

In a field study with 40,000 donors, researchers tested different messages: "A private donor who believes in the importance of the project has given this campaign..."

→ **Seed:** "...seed money in the amount of \$10,000."

→ **Match:** "...a matching grant in the amount of \$10,000"

→ **Overhead:** "...a grant in the amount of \$10,000 to cover all the overhead costs associated with raising the needed donations."

Overhead strategy was the clear winner (Gneezy et al., 2014).

(see fig 1)

HOW TO APPLY

→ **Show Humans, Not Robots.** People don't want to pay executive salaries, and they also don't want to pay robots. In one study, a charity received fewer donations when they showed a robot helping with a mudslide disaster (Chen & Huang, 2023). These donations feel like they would help the efficiency of robots, rather than the beneficiaries.

(see fig 2)

→ **Avoid "We" Pronouns.** Donors want to help people, but "we" pronouns (e.g., we help children) rob them of this feeling. The *charity* is helping. Not the donor. Insert "you" pronouns (e.g., you can help children) to connect donors to the beneficiaries.

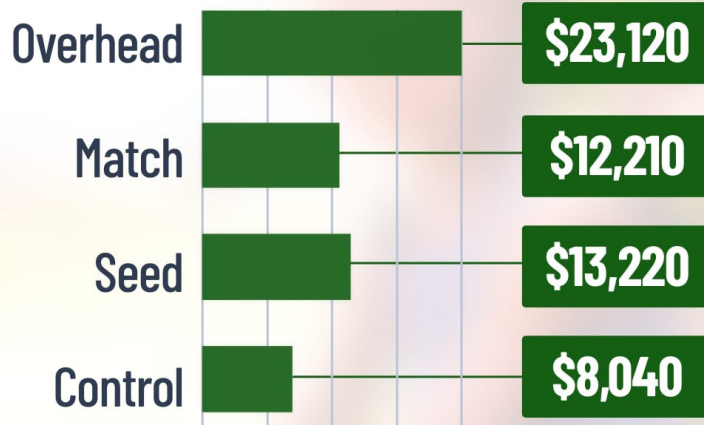
(see fig 3)

Gneezy, U., Keenan, E. A., & Gneezy, A. (2014). Avoiding overhead aversion in charity. *Science*, 346(6209), 632-635.

Chen, F., & Huang, S. C. (2023). Robots or humans for disaster response? Impact on consumer prosociality and possible explanations. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 33(2), 432-440.

Donation Strategies

1



2



3

We raised
\$100 million

Donate \$5



HELP DONORS SEE AN INCREMENTAL DIFFERENCE

Marketers typically show high numbers next to prices, but this anchoring effect can backfire with donations.

Be careful with large numbers.

If you raised \$100 million, that's great. But imagine somebody donating \$5 to the charity. Would it even matter?

Donors want to feel like they're making a difference.

HOW TO APPLY

→ **Commit to a Small Minimum Threshold.** Which is better: We'll donate *at least* \$1 million? Or *up to* \$1 million? Large minimums can be scary for sponsors — if nobody donates, it's a high cost. When Fage yogurt was donating \$0.20 for every valid purchase, participants were more likely to buy Fage with a small minimum of \$10,000 (vs. \$10 million) because their individual contribution felt more impactful to reach this goal (Tsiros & Irmak, 2020).

(see fig 1)

→ **Mention a Smaller Portion of Progress.** Trying to raise \$10k? Should you mention the progress you've made? Or remaining progress? Initially, you should mention the accrued donations (e.g., we raised \$1,000). After crossing the halfway point toward your goal, switch to remaining progress (e.g., only \$4,000 left). In both cases, this number will be smaller — and this smaller size is more motivating (Koo & Fishbach, 2012).

(see fig 2)

Koo, M., & Fishbach, A. (2012). The small-area hypothesis: Effects of progress monitoring on goal adherence. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39(3), 493-509.

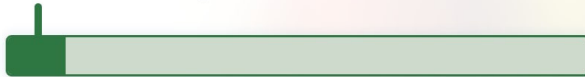
Tsiros, M., & Irmak, C. (2020). Lowering the minimum donation amount increases consumer purchase likelihood of products associated with cause-related marketing campaigns. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 57(4), 755-770.

1

We'll donate at least
~~\$10,000,000~~

2

We raised **\$1,000**



Only **\$1,000** left



Donate
5 hours

Donate
\$100

ASK PEOPLE TO DONATE TIME OR MONEY

Certain requests appeal to certain people.

Look at this image:

(see fig 1)

Some people focus on the *person*, while other people focus on the *object*.

Researchers call it person-thing orientation (PTO), and it determines whether you prefer donating time or money (Malika et al., 2023)

- **Person-Focus:** You donate time.
- **Object-Focus:** You donate money.

HOW TO APPLY

- **Offer Both Ways to Donate.** A single appeal would exclude donors who prefer the alternative.
- **Send Appeals to the Right Donors.** Survey donors to categorize them by PTO so that you can send appeals

— time or money — to the right segments. Or use known segments (e.g., employees in higher positions of a business prefer donating money; Reed et al., 2007).

(see fig 2)

→ **Adapt Your Appeals to Economic Conditions.** People prefer donating time during recessions: “Economic contraction may lead consumers to face important trade-offs in their prosocial behaviors... consumers may prefer to volunteer their time under such conditions and hence, charitable organizations should promote how consumers can safely volunteer their time” (Malika et al., 2023)

(see fig 3)

Malika, M., Ghoshal, T., Mathur, P., & Maheswaran, D. (2023). Does scarcity increase or decrease donation behaviors? *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 1-23.

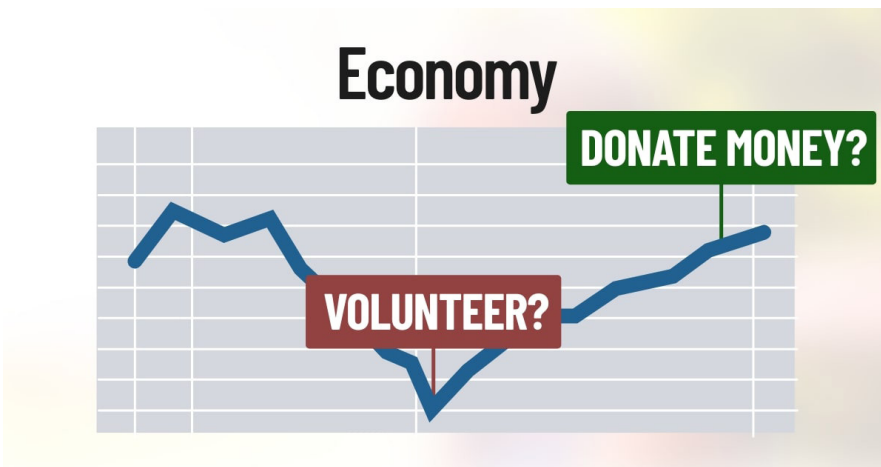
Reed, A., Aquino, K., & Levy, E. (2007). Moral identity and judgments of charitable behaviors. *Journal of marketing*, 71(1), 178-193.



1



2



3

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