

Chapter 9

The fundraising academy: an experimental model combining knowledge exchange, real-life professional training and the development of socio-emotional intelligence

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9.1 Introduction

Doing something meaningful that gives us satisfaction and has a positive impact on the world can enrich our experience. Indeed “to be human is to live in a personal world that carries a sense of how things are for the person.” (Todres et al. 2009, p.30). Being a fundraiser can be a way of achieving this sense of purpose and fulfilment. In this chapter, we present the case study of Bournemouth University’s (BU) Fusion Fundraising Academy (the Academy). Launched in 2019, this unique programme aims to prepare the fundraisers of the future while demonstrating the vital role that universities play in enriching society. Through a robust programme developed with an embodied relational understanding in mind, it combines direct knowledge exchange (head) with professional practice (hand), social interaction and socio-emotional intelligence (SEI) (heart). In this way, the Academy exemplifies how fundraising can be taught in a more holistic or humanised way (Devis-Rozental 2018).

The Academy’s model is unusual as it combines masterclasses and workshops with real-world fundraising for local charities, consultancy-style projects for small local, national and international charities, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) experience with companies or grant-making trusts. Each intern spends nine months developing their skills by gaining knowledge, and the participants are currently BU students undertaking their industrial placement year before returning to university for their final year. The model could, however, be rolled out for graduates or second-career individuals.

9.2 Background

The Academy was originally an idea born out of necessity, following the Fundraising & Alumni Relations Department’s failure to successfully recruit new staff. We knew we had great projects for which to raise money, including researching the diagnosis and treatment of prosopagnosia, a state-of-the-art building for trainee nurses, and conservation of a 17th century shipwreck in Poole Harbour. We offer a competitive employment package with a good salary and excellent working conditions, yet we ran several unsuccessful recruitment campaigns. Our recruitment campaigns coincided with increased approaches from head-hunters towards existing team members, with an interesting pattern of approaches from the US, Australia and New Zealand in addition to the usual UK / European requests. The traditional UK charity sector (i.e. not

universities) also started advertising directly on university fundraising forums and in segmented publications.

In 2013 we undertook a short survey on one of the fundraising forums asking universities if they had struggled to recruit to fundraising positions. The 13 universities who took part all replied that they could not recruit. Responses ranged from Russell Group and Oxbridge colleges to new, smaller universities. Many Fundraising Directors noted that they had advertised the same position several times, and either received no or few applications. Some put the position on hold; some continued short-staffed, and some decided to home-grow new team members.

The problem extends beyond the university sector and exempt charities to include registered charities. For instance, 71% of respondents to a 2017 survey said that their organisation did not have the requisite skills to run a successful fundraising campaign. 56% also said that generating income and achieving financial sustainability were their greatest concern (2017/18 Local Charity and Community Group Sustainability Report, Local Giving).

We tried various ways to increase the size of the Fundraising Department, including home-growing staff. This had mixed success and the reasons for the failures which did occur varied. They included a lack of emotional resilience, adaptability, relevant transferable skills and mixed ability to ask for money. The successes were notable, but the whole team agreed that the investment in home-growing one member of staff – who would remain unproven for c12-18 months (owing to the lead time for fundraising) was significant.

The successful fundraiser needs a sound theoretical understanding of the main laws impacting day to day work. It also needs socio-emotional intelligence encompassing areas such as empathy, confidence and self-awareness to work with donors, as well as the resilience to be exposed to sometimes difficult themes and activities while not getting burnout (which is the withdrawal of activities that used to be enjoyable due to stress and emotional fatigue). Symptoms of burnout may include disengagement, feeling alienated, loss of purpose or meaning and exhaustion, amongst other things. It is a term usually related to those working in the helping professions where compassion, emotional support and difficult conversations may take place (Ransom 2016).

Within the fundraising world, this is also a concern, and clearly evident when searching online for “fundraiser burnout” which will return thousands of results. Fundraising, according to McGuinness (2018), is frequently referred to as the “revolving door”. Additionally, resilience, happiness and a good work/life

balance are as important for established staff as trainees – yet very little attention or training is given in this area.

We searched for internships or training which would help to develop the next generation of competent and resilient fundraisers, but found only single-topic courses and internships which were either short-term and unpaid, or working with the larger established universities. Fundraising courses are not prolific: Smith (2018) notes that,

there are over 880,000 people working in the not-for-profit (NFP) sector in the UK and it's no secret that effective fundraising is central to the success of an NFP organisation. It's therefore surprising that UK-based options for studying fundraising can be hard to find.

Many of the issues we consider vital do not appear to be addressed in training (for instance, donor dominance and sexual harassment, working with Royal Patrons and the press, costing projects, resilience and developing support networks). We also couldn't find any internships which actually enabled trainee fundraisers to sit down in front of a major donor to ask for money face to face – yet we expect individuals to segue into confident, knowledgeable fundraisers.

The internships we discovered were usually with larger charities or universities; this may be because they have the staff and resources to support trainees. The problem with these internships, however, is that they don't represent the majority of the voluntary sector in the UK. According to the Charity Commission, 98.7% of the (registered) voluntary sector earned less than £5m in 2016, and nearly 40% earned less than £10,000 (Keen and Audickas 2017).

The Foundation for Social Investment (FSI 2017) recently noted: “Skills gaps in fundraising appear to be most pronounced in charities with a lower annual turnover. 53% of small charities with an income of less than £150,000 recognised a need for upskilling in fundraising, while only 19% of charities with a turnover between £1m - £1.5m recognised the same need.” Internships could, therefore, be seen to self-perpetuate the supply of fundraisers to the wealthiest charities.

9.3 The model

While all forms of fundraising are in demand in the UK and further afield, major donor fundraising is currently the area with the most considerable skills shortage (reinforced by our Research into other universities' shortage of fundraisers) (FSI 2017). It is also one of the areas with the best cost: benefit ratio, meaning it can be a very cost-effective way to raise money.

As previously mentioned, successful major donor fundraisers need a broad range of hard and soft skills, some less obvious than others. The Academy has been developed with a full-time comprehensive curriculum covering nine months, enabling each intern to learn from industry experts and through 'on-the-job' experience. To develop the curriculum, we began with two main questions:

1. What skills would the perfect major donor fundraiser have?
2. What do we wish we knew/had experienced when we all started work?

These two questions allowed us to think carefully about the type of programme we wanted to develop to provide our interns with an experience that would support them in growing holistically. For this, we made use of our lived experience, and every member of the Fundraising & Alumni Relations Department reflected on their journey so far. We took into account our personal journeys and looked at our own mistakes, difficult situations and social faux pas. We wanted to try to prevent the interns making the same mistakes as us; by developing a curriculum based on the commonalities of our journeys while acknowledging that we are all unique. Each individual's experience would, therefore, be different, and they would have to be active in their own sense-making (Galvin and Todres 2013).

We decided that there should be a mix of masterclasses and theoretical learning alongside experiential learning activities with fundraising 'on the ground'. That was then split into internship positions with a partner charity and consultancy projects. The former enables the interns to experience a broad range of fundraising tasks and the reality of joining an established charity team. This gives them the possibility to have real-life experiences and learn by doing while developing their own sense of place and agency to experience making choices, being generally held accountable for their actions, attitudes and decisions. The latter encourages the interns to work as a successful team to solve challenges and present real-world solutions in a time-pressured environment. By doing so, interns can develop SEI skills - an important attribute when working with others.

The masterclasses are delivered by a range of internal and external speakers. For instance, the first month's intensive sessions were primarily delivered by members of the Fundraising & Alumni Relations department. As the interns grow in experience and confidence, the masterclasses evolve. All the external speakers generously gave their time for free, meaning the budget can be concentrated on good salaries for the trainee fundraisers. Topics covered by expert speakers included:

- Working with the press and Royal Patrons
- Donor dominance and sexual harassment
- Networking

- Running a capital fundraising campaign
- Forms of address
- Managing a grant-making trust
- Asking a major donor for money

9.4 The aim of the Academy

The ultimate aim of the Academy is to produce charity-ready fundraisers and to start to increase the pool of talented and able staff for causes in the UK.

There are, however, a number of secondary aims:

- **Community benefit**

Our university has made a commitment to support local communities and to enable knowledge exchange through staff and students; this allowed us to gain funding to recruit salaried interns so that our charity partners wouldn't incur a cost. This is a positive step since we know that the majority of charities (and certainly the smaller ones) struggle to raise enough money to fund their day-to-day operations, and they certainly can't afford to home-grow staff. Consequently, these charities are receiving free fundraising support while providing staff resources in management and coaching.

The interns are also undertaking a number of consultancy-style projects during the year, and we worked with The Fore (2020) - a charity which supports grass-route initiatives; "believes any organisation with the talent and drive to create social change should be able to access the support it needs to fulfil its potential" - to select small charities which were predominantly volunteer-run. These included a community kitchen in London, a farming charity in Malawi and a schools-outreach initiative. Since these charities could not afford to pay for fundraising consultancy, it is great to be able to give them a number of consultancy days for free. Doing so reinforces our fundraising team's commitment and passion about our community's benefit, while we are able to support small and often-overlooked causes.

- **Hard and soft skills development**

"the "insiderness" dimension of our humanity is the "soft underbelly" that often lies hidden in the shadows." (Todres et al. 2014, p. 9).

The qualities of a good fundraiser are directly transferable to many other professions. We can draw direct comparisons between technical / work specific (hard) skills such as learning to ask a donor for money (sales techniques), developing funding applications (learning to write for different audiences) and charity law (issues around liability). While the development of skills which can be easily mapped across professions is notable, far more critical is the fast-track acquisition or re-discovery of people's soft skills.

In the Academy, these include rediscovering a sense of self, where insidership and personal journey are important (Todres et al. 2009) as a way of finding purpose in what we do. It is also about developing SEI skills such as assertiveness and confidence by becoming comfortable asking for money, requiring negotiating skills, developing and maintaining empathy, social awareness and understanding the psychology of donors and their giving motivations. These skills all support the development of influencing skills for meetings, developing self-awareness, motivation and an understanding of management strategies while managing senior volunteers (leading beyond authority); all of which provide beneficial techniques and knowledge to use in any field. Soft skills are incredibly valuable; a recent report noted that the value of soft skills to the UK is c£88billion, and they predict an increase to £127billion by 2025 (Development Economics 2015). In personal financial terms, soft skills can increase in an individual's earning potential by up to 15% (McDonalds UK 2015).

Developing these soft skills will support these interns in gaining knowledge and expertise that can be transferable to any area of their lives and therefore enrich their experience. More importantly, reflecting and developing these areas has a benefit that goes beyond being a sound practitioner, as they may enrich an individual's experience and their self-identity.

Soft skills and self-development are very much in demand, yet there appears to be a considerable skills gap in graduates who have not undertaken work placements or internships. The Institute of Student Employers (2017) reported that the five most common graduate skills gaps were:

- Managing up (only 5% of employers believed graduates had this skill)
- Dealing with conflict (12%)
- Negotiating/influencing (17%)
- Commercial awareness (23%)
- Resilience (31%)

Furthermore, the Edge Foundation reports that 92% of employers surveyed said soft skills matter as much or more than hard skills. 80% said soft skills are increasingly crucial to company success, and this statement is particularly telling; "While hard skills may get a candidate's foot in the door, it's soft skills that ultimately open it." (The Edge Foundation 2019).

Gaining these skills is useful and necessary, especially as professions change and various 'hard' skills required in many jobs may be automated. Still, these more 'human' characteristics (including social interaction, kindness, consideration, empathy and engagement with others) are much more difficult to replicate – even though they are essential for success in the workplace. Especially if we consider the idea presented by Devis-Rozental (2018) of SEI intelligence as being something which must have a positive impact on others and our environment. It is no longer merely about our own development but also how that impacts around us, and this is something that links well with the fundraising environment, and particularly with the concept of leading beyond authority. Common purpose (2020) notes that

People who lead beyond their authority can produce change beyond their direct circle of control... Leading beyond authority requires many different skills. Leaders need to be able to work in new situations and should keep in mind that they need three key competencies – the right approach, a good strategic mindset and the ability to work with people (especially people who aren't like you)

Several characteristics in each of the specific competencies resonate with both fundraising and SEI. They include "independence, passion, building coalitions and cultural intelligence"; these soft skills all have a great capacity to impact and influence those around us. The Academy's curriculum has been designed to gradually introduce increasingly challenging social situations such as networking lunches, formal and informal meetings and leading beyond authority. The interns learn in a safe environment where they can try things and learn from their mistakes. We argue that the best lessons within their working environment come from direct experience where they can make sense of their experience and develop their own personal journey (Devis-Rozental 2018).

Many of the skills required to master fundraising are soft and cannot be learnt from a book. The most successful individuals are those that have a lived experience they can draw from. Having the time and space to reflect on their learning helps them to contextualise these and gain valuable lessons for their future jobs. This will also help them develop passion and enthusiasm for their work as they can see how meaningful it can be.

- **Wellness and resilience**

As referred to earlier in this chapter, fundraiser burnout is a real concern – both for the individuals affected and their employers. Research in the US by Mind Share Partners (2019) indicated that Generation Z (individuals born from the mid-1990s to mid-2000s) are more likely to experience mental health symptoms for longer durations; they are, however, also more open to diagnosis and treatment than their forebears.

Even though socio-emotional skills are vital to employees, these are not usually explicitly taught within programmes. Still, being able to cope with challenges at work and particularly the transition from full-time study to full-time employment is incredibly important for the wellbeing of the individual, and perhaps more importance should be placed on this.

One area which is essential to our wellbeing is happiness, which in turn is closely linked to resilience. For instance, Rapee (cited by McDevett 2028) notes: “if people can deal with stressors in their lives and can bounce back quickly from stressors, they’ll be much more likely to be happy and happy for longer”. Additionally, Rapee (cited by McDevett 2018) states:

“Being able to manage emotions and stress can impact everything from family, social relationships and jobs to medical and physical issues. The financial costs are very high if we look at absenteeism, family breakdown and problems in the classroom.”

This is further asserted by Devis-Rozental (2018) when talking about managing emotions to enhance our wellbeing. Developing an understanding and self-awareness of how we react to situations can help us manage them better, even under challenging circumstances. Identifying our triggers and the areas, we must continue developing can help us become more resilient. This is important as we are placing more expectations on people. We shouldn’t

“neglect the psychological skills required by employees. It’s not just about learning a job role and its technical skills, but knowing how to deal with pressure, workloads and all the stressors that are now intertwined with the technical demands of a role.” (Rapee cited by McDevett 2018)

Happiness is a factor in wellbeing and employee health, and it is also a key factor in fundraising. Studies have highlighted that happy people are likely to give back to their communities, whether through time or money; “this effect is one of the most robust findings in the literature on positive mood and social behavior, (sic) having been variously called the “feel good, do good” phenomenon,

the “glow of goodwill,” and the “warm glow of success.” (Lyubomirsky et al. 2005, p.35). The reverse can also be true, in that the very act of giving back to one's community can induce a feeling of wellbeing, contentment and happiness. In fact, the Happiness Academy (2019) developed The 12 pillars of happiness with areas such as gratitude, purpose, resilience self-development and engagement seen as vital to people's happiness.

This can be the case for financial giving or time. Volunteering for a favourite charity (for instance) can lower stress, increase happiness and increase social connections (Brain UP 2020). This, in turn, gives us a sense of purpose which will improve our motivation and engagement.

The whole model of the Academy is based around small charities, their need for support and the service beneficiaries they support. The feel-good factor is a well-known motivator for fundraisers; it was listed as one of the top 5 reasons on JustGiving (2016) for why individuals fundraise. Specifically, the respondents said they fundraised “to feel good, helping others, making a difference”.

Positive emotions don't just make us – as fundraisers – feel better about ourselves, but they can also be indicators of future success. A study by Cohn et al. (2009, p. 2), noted that “positive emotions forecast valued outcomes like health, wealth and longevity because they help build the resources to get there”. Ego-resilience (the ability to bounce back from challenging life events) and positive emotions seem to exist in a loop, where they “maintain and build on one another” (Cohn et al. 2009, p. 9). This is particularly important if we are to develop a more humanised practice where people are at the centre of what we do.

It would be too simplistic to say that fundraising for charities is an instant path to wellbeing and resilience. Still, fundraising is an excellent career in which to experience tremendous highs and the polar opposite, the freezing lows. The highs are enormously positive; helping to save lives through funding mental health nurses or finding cures for disease; preventing poverty and providing sanitation and clean drinking water; assisting a hospice in giving comfort in the final days of life, and many more life-altering situations. The interns are faced with different life challenges during their work with their partner charities, which will test them in lots of different ways, and they must have the opportunity to develop the socio-emotional skills which will help them to succeed.

- **To promote fundraising as a career**

Fundraising does not appear to be well-known as a career path. Each of the interviewees for the first year of the Academy was asked whether they had thought about fundraising as a career before they saw the adverts – and 100% said they did not know it was an option.

There are many paths to fundraising, but most positions understandably require some experience (in a charity, the voluntary Trustees are legally and financially liable for mistakes made by their fundraisers which can make employing new fundraisers a risk. Experience can be gained as a volunteer or paid member of staff. Still, fundraising can appear quite one-sided to the public, with only community activities evident (such as sponsored tasks or events). The many specialisms of fundraising are not well-known amongst the general public, and therefore it is not surprising that fundraising is not often thought of as career choice.

9.5 Evaluation during our first year

Feedback from our partners was fantastic with one team stating:

"It was a brilliant day, thank you very much... your team [our interns] were quite superb, very well presented, articulate and personable, all the Fuellers were impressed and enjoyed the day."

Another charity wrote:

"The students conducted themselves in a professional and exemplary fashion throughout, respecting the confidentiality of our business and responding clearly to the brief given. They addressed our requirements astutely and concisely, providing two informative and practical reports. They have given us a clear direction on the way that [charity] needs to work in the future, in terms of both organisation and fundraising. Their suggestions give us a firm base upon which to operate in the future."

Additionally, and to evaluate the programme's efficacy in supporting students in developing their SEI while taking part in this distinct programme, we carried out a focus group with five interns nearing the end of their internship. We wanted to find out if this method of experiential learning mixed with masterclasses had supported them in developing skills for life.

During the focus group, it was clear that the interns had gained a wealth of knowledge and experience while attending the Academy. One participant stated:

I think we've learned a lot of skills and SEI, so we've done lots of master classes in public speaking and transferrable skills for the future. When we did our public speaking workshop, we learned about our physical responses and made us a lot more aware of why we felt the way we did.

Interns talked about gaining skills from opportunities to network, practise skills such as public speaking and being able to practice what they had learned during the workshops. One participant explained:

I definitely think that it has worked because we're doing theory but then putting it into practice. So that's been really good throughout the Academy. I think if we just had the Academy and none of us were with our charity partners, it would be a bit of a killer because it would be so much theory all year. They've definitely done it well that you learn and then you can actually implement it straight away.... so, it's nice to learn things and put it into practice.

They identified how this type of Academy was distinct, and all were appreciative of the opportunities given with another participant telling us:

I think we've had loads of opportunities that maybe another type of internship may not have given us or the type of people we've met

This they all agreed, helped them build their confidence with an intern saying, "I'm a lot more confident in speaking out". Another intern said:

I think a lot of events to go with our charities, we go out and do certain types of events. I think that helps with confidence and self-esteem

These skills were then transferable to their work with charities. An example of this was given by one of the interns:

I suppose for me today I've come from a bereavement session [in the charity], so I've gotta... I haven't lost anyone...well, I've lost my grandmother but some of these people in this session have lost husbands, wives, quite early on. So just being confident in myself and being sensitive. Although I haven't been in their shoes, you know, I have to sort of still...I want to be confident because I am there for a reason. I'm fundraising, and it's part of what I need to do, but yeah it's that whole 'I haven't been in that situation' so again, confidence and that's probably grown over time because I have become really invested in the hospice and what I was doing.

Being able to have experts talking to them and the opportunity to learn how to address people in various mediums and meeting was also beneficial to them.

We have high net worth level individuals come in and speak to us, and we have to do a lot of learning which tells you how to address specific people Not only communicate but written communication as well. I found it really useful in that sense but also meeting high net worth level individuals and again the events. Just meeting a range of people, to be honest.

Another intern added

We've had to learn to have a working lunch and eat and then also talk Little skills like that have been really good like developing your confidence by holding a conversation with someone you just met.

The opportunity to learn from others was seen as very important by all. One participant illustrated this by saying:

I've learned so much from this, and it is people coming in, and even if I get little bits from each person, I can kind of accumulate to this and when I tie that to other work and I will remember certain things that they've said.

Another intern mentioned empathy as something which had developed further:

I definitely felt quite an empathetic person beforehand. But I definitely think this experience at the Academy, working with different people, being in a team, the environment, I've probably developed those skills more.

Assertiveness, self-awareness and a more critical approach to things were also identified as learning gains during the fundraising academy. Overall, they felt the experience has given them a wealth of knowledge that they will be able to apply to other areas of their life. They thought that the distinctness of the programme worked well, although they would have liked more time "on the ground" with the charities and meeting people they could be helping because to them the main thing was to find purpose in what they do.

At least I'm learning how I can help other people and especially working for a charity. You may feel like you're not doing a lot but actually me being here, I am helping them.

Furthermore, an intern asserted:

I think sometimes it is difficult to feel like you are making a difference, especially if you are in a large charity and your internship level... we kind of didn't feel like we were making any difference. Now, as we started doing more and more and more, it does. I think if you're in a smaller organisation, it's definitely a purpose. It feels like a real purpose.

Regarding other opportunities for improvement, there were two main areas which participants identified. The first one was trying to ensure that there were more opportunities to liaise with people from different cultures and background. There was an overall consensus that there was a gender and age imbalance, although one participant stated:

That's not really representative of the Academy though because you can't help that the industry at the moment is mainly men.

The reality is that this is a complex issue shaped by socio-economic and cultural traditions. This is slowly changing as gender roles continue to shift, and our environment becomes more multicultural. The fact that the interns were confident to raise this issue demonstrates a high level of critical thinking which is an excellent outcome as they move onto the next stage of their journey, as they will be mindful of this and eager to continue challenging it.

The second area identified was to develop a better balance in the way interns are seen within the Academy. To us, they were second-year students coming to learn a craft, but once they got into their charities, they were full-time employees completing a task. Therefore, we need to ensure that from the first day in our Academy, they are more empowered to feel as members of staff and peers in this journey. This is something we had already identified as an area for improvement through our reflections in practice and which will be addressed as we get ready for our next cohort of interns.

Interestingly, the main area where interns struggled was time management, especially at the beginning of the programme and at times generational differences regarding what should be important, for example how to address people, as one participant stated:

I know people have earned their titles by doing something, but I always see it as weird. I mean we're both people. I should be able to speak to you as a person without having this different power balance.

9.6 Main learning points

The Fundraising Academy has been developed and is being run by professional fundraising staff at Bournemouth University. It was not designed to be an academic course but based on a traditional industrial work placement combined with a fast-track learning process. We knew we had a lot to learn – both about developing a successful model which could be rolled out to other institutions and from the interns themselves. While some members of the team were experienced in training or home-growing staff, none of us had trained non-office workers before. We have adjusted the curriculum throughout the first year and made changes for the next cohort of interns - this will be an ongoing process! Our main lessons from the first year include:

9.6.1 Do not assume a level of knowledge

The curriculum was planned to carefully induct each intern into the vagaries of fundraising, the laws and the socio-emotional skills required to lead beyond authority. We did not assume any knowledge of fundraising. We did, however, assume a level of knowledge about working in an office and basic office systems. For many of the interns, this was their first job in an office, and therefore we had to develop some additional learning sessions, for which we had to make time.

9.6.2 Transitioning from education into full-time work benefits from a lead time

The soft skills required to be a productive member of a team, working full-time with a commute, cannot be learned instantly. University students have, on average, 11 hours teaching or lecturing time per week. If they don't see the rest of the time as if it was a full-time job, to cope with the expectation to undertake Research and assignments, the cultural shock to move to a fixed 37.5 hour week can be significant. Especially when interns are expected to attend fast-track training for many of the days. To ease these interns into a full-time routine, we enabled them to work shorter days for most of the first month until they had built up the resilience and stamina to complete the full week's hours.

9.6.3 Ability to absorb volumes of information vs societal references

The interns had completed two years at university before they joined the Academy, and their ability to absorb volumes of complex information far surpassed that of the existing team members. Not surprisingly they had been primed to sift through swathes of data and to accurately pull out what they needed. This meant that their learning curve (purely for technical sessions) was faster than expected.

The age and life experience of the interns (most had joined university straight after sixth form) meant that their societal references were different from existing team members. The interns learnt the theories

incredibly quickly, but they needed more developmental time and support to apply that information in a practical sense. The learning curve for the application of the theories was, therefore, slower than expected.

This was managed by rearranging the curriculum to give the interns more time on practical projects, helping them to learn through experiential methods. This novel method of teaching and learning also challenged us and how to support and engage the interns. We must continue developing our approach and always remember that these interns are our peers in the learning journey, and we are learning from them as much as they learn from us.

9.6.4 Fundraising is even bigger than we realised

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the curriculum was designed to cover a wide range of fundraising and associated skills, primarily based on the combined experiences of the department. It became apparent that nine months are not long enough to cover all the "main" forms of fundraising, as these are evolving so quickly (for instance, we could not include crowdfunding or social media as dedicated new ways to raise money). We focused instead on the background skills which are in demand, but we will need to be agile with the curriculum as an organic evolution of the industry occurs.

9.6.5 The charity placements might experience difficulties

Recruiting a new member of staff is always a challenge and taking on an intern requires a particular appetite for risk from the main charity partners. BU generously funded the salaries of the interns, so reducing the financial outlay required from the partners, but management time is still a precious resource. Our charity partners had to be willing to devote time (and therefore indirectly money) to manage the new staff without any guarantee of funds raised. There have been instances of a personality clash or sickness absences which we've had to manage. It is not always straightforward.

9.6.6 The importance of working together

Something important to mention is that the Academy would not have been successful without the expertise and dedication of all the members of our team. Everyone brought their strengths and gave their all to make the Academy a reality. They all supported us with gathering market data, delivering workshops, mentoring and role modelling the attitudes and behaviours we wanted our interns to gain. It would have been practically impossible to have achieved so much in such a short time without their commitment to making this happen. We are very grateful that they shared our passion and helped us deliver this new way of supporting the fundraisers of the future.

9.7 Conclusion

The Fundraising Academy is a three-year project, and so evaluation is ongoing. The early indication is that the model works, and the style of teaching and learning is greatly benefiting the interns. A measure of success will be how many of each year's intake decide to go into fundraising positions. Still, the self-reported resilience, happiness and work-readiness of each intern are also crucial, so we will be following up the interns as they return to their final year of study and then enter their chosen professions.

BU's Fundraising & Alumni Relations team has researched, planned, developed and run the Academy in addition to their "day" jobs. We are incredibly lucky to be given the budget and opportunity to do so, but this may not be the most sustainable model going forward. It may not work for other institutions, as it relies on the willingness and ability of existing staff to absorb additional work and to perform the tasks required (such as training, course development, securing external speakers etc.). It does, however, provide a template model to develop the fundraisers of the future in partnership with the local voluntary sector. There is no reason why the model could not be developed to include individuals looking to change career from other professions (both civilian and armed forces).

It has been a great experience for the Fundraising & Alumni Relations team so far and has validated our belief that SEI is vital – regardless of one's chosen profession. Soft skills will become more important as the differentiator between average and excellent team members, and it may be that universities can humanise education by helping their students – and their staff – to develop further in this area.

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