



SOFII letters to look out for, #2 Summer 2018

Making sure no fundraiser is ever alone

The outer envelope, hand-addressed with a real stamp, was followed by Meredith's four-page personally topped and tailed letter. And a further copy of the leaflet explaining SOFII's competition.

The Showcase of Fundraising Innovation and Inspiration

The SOFII Foundation, 53d Highbury Park London N5 1TH, UK. Tel: 020 7226 7140.
Reg. Charity No 1124743. www.sofii.org.

'What's the best way to make charities more effective? In my view, recruiting, developing and encouraging the best people at all levels across fundraising. As a senior leader, I have a simple ambition. If I can help get great people into fundraising, then help develop and retain them so that they can inspire more people to give and find meaning from their philanthropy, I will be very happy. 😊

Dear Ken,

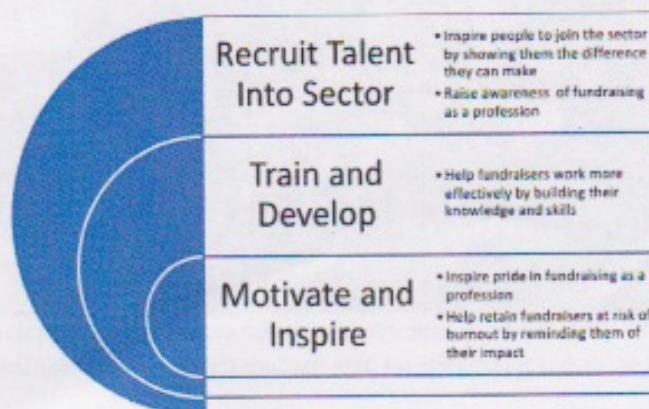
I'm guessing you'll agree with the sentiment above.

I'm Meredith Niles by the way, Executive Director of Fundraising and Engagement at Marie Curie and for the past year a trustee of the SOFII Foundation. I volunteered to join the SOFII board because it gives me a chance to realise that transformational dream outlined above.

Actually I'm not taking too much of a risk, believing that you and your organisation will share this dream with me. I'm sure your people and how they learn and grow are every bit as important to you and your business as ours are to our cause. Few things matter more to any enterprise. Developing people properly is certainly worth special effort.

If you share the dream I think you'll also appreciate what so attracted me to SOFII. Ideas like "no fundraiser left alone or unsupported" and "no wheel re-invented"

(i.e. no resources wasted testing things that won't work or have already been tried and tested before). I think you might like the model I was starting to imagine - it's illustrated here. SOFII sees itself as a people development



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function for fundraisers: top quality content for knowledge development has always been part of SOFII, but as I've become more involved and as we've evolved the **World-changers at Work** idea, I started to see how SOFII could be a platform for helping us inspire people into the industry and to retain people who are already working in the sector by staving off burnout.

As I began to get more involved in SOFII, I really appreciated hearing first-hand from fundraisers who have been inspired and influenced by SOFII. Fundraisers like Ryna, who wrote about how SOFII helped her feel part of a connected community despite being the only professional fundraiser in her country. And I know personally how much inspiration I draw from attending IWITOT each year – even leaders need a regular shot of stimulation to keep us at our best!

What I like about the model on the previous page is that it takes what I think SOFII already does well – explaining and sharing what matters most and preventing duplication by making resources commonly and easily available – and replicates it across other stages of the talent management journey. Young people come into fundraising because they want to make a difference, to change the world. A strong interest in 'their' cause is essential to being an effective fundraiser so individual charities need to work hard at inspiring this. A

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IWITOT is SOFII's flagship event held each year in several capital cities – a great sponsorship opportunity for organisations that want to change the world.

passion for the discipline of fundraising is important too, and that's something that can be 'crowdsourced and shared' like the other resources on SOFII.

Lone fundraisers particularly get a lot out of SOFII, as do those working in small charities that don't have a supportive HR function, don't get the chance to attend national conferences or don't have big budgets for training.

There are other reasons why I personally support SOFII:

- "Standing on the shoulders of giants": I like the idea of our sector sharing knowledge so that we can build on each other's learning and accomplish more/more quickly.
- Social impact: I've worked with tiny charities with tiny budgets, and I know how difficult it is for their lone fundraisers. The idea of helping those fundraisers get access to the kind of thinking that, at a conference, would cost a lot really motivates me. Even more motivating is thinking about the impact that those charities will be able to have as a result of better, more effective fundraising.
- Professional pride: I like the idea that there are people who think our profession is valuable enough that its history is worth preserving.
- "Honouring one's elders": This is very personal for me, reflecting the values my parents instilled in me. I have huge respect for those who have shaped and continue to shape the fundraising profession. It's important to honour that, and for future generations to continue to learn from those who came before us.

My point is, Britain's voluntary sector deserves to be the best resourced business area of all, because we're all working for a greater purpose. It isn't, because charities seldom have the funds to do such things properly.

That's why we fundraisers value SOFII and why I'm telling you this, so that you'll appreciate what SOFII does and help spread understanding among your colleagues and associates.

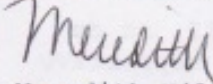
SOFII will prosper if potential business partners, major donors, trusts and foundations committed to strengthening the voluntary sector all come together to support and inspire young fundraisers across the world and pass on their experiences, to help these keen newbies to make the best and biggest difference they possibly can.

In this occasional series of special letters we'll be shining a spotlight on different aspects of SOFII's contribution to fundraising excellence so you can see what a great resource it is. And you can use it to inspire your colleagues too.

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Thank you for all you and your colleagues do to advance and improve what charities do, to make ours a better world.

Yours sincerely,



Meredith Niles,
SOFII Trustee

PS As a bit of fun (but with a purpose), SOFII is running a competition for companies and suppliers to the fundraising industry. It's your chance to tell charities about the great things you do.

Convince member(s) of your staff to enter. Or enter yourself - 500 words maximum - about your/their experience of wanting to change the world or make a tangible difference, why that matters and how you're/they're doing it in your organisation.

A personal view, in other words.

There will be at least three finalists (we've already had some great entries, with more coming). Each entry will then be published on the SOFII website as part of our new ***World Changers at Work*** series, starting later this year.

I've enclosed a poster you can put on your company noticeboard. Let me know if you need more.

And while the three finalists will be featured on the website, SOFII sponsor The White Lion Press will donate for every entry a copy of the classic *Tiny Essentials of Fundraising*. The three winners get an instant library - all eight books in the *Tiny Essentials* series.

Please submit your entries on or before 31st August. Thank you.



Before joining Marie Curie, Meredith Niles worked as an investment director at venture philanthropy foundation Impetus-Private Equity Fund and at Goldman Sachs, where she was an executive director in the Investment Banking Division.

In addition to serving SOFII Meredith gives her time as a trustee of Plan International UK and Trust for London. She earned a BA with Highest Distinction and Highest Honours from

the University of North Carolina and an MSc from the London School of Economics.

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In 500 words.

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WOW!
WORLD-CHANGERS AT WORK

