

Grants Fundraising

Neela Jane Stansfield



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‘This book must have been a labour of love – a comprehensive view of grants fundraising based on solid research and the experience of a successful trust fundraiser. It’s all here: the how to, the why and the real-life examples. If you need a friendly guide to grants fundraising, this is the book for you.’

Alex Blake, Director, KEDA Consulting

‘*Grants Fundraising* is a treasure trove of fundraising riches, written in an approachable and engaging style. It is essential for anyone who is looking to establish a modern and profitable grants fundraising programme.

Neela Jane shows how grants fundraising has changed over the years, with relationships now centre stage. She debunks the myths of this much misunderstood discipline and shares case studies – addressing both success and failure – which provide a fascinating insight into real-world fundraising. The generosity of Neela Jane and her contributors will help others looking to follow them on the path to success.’

Caroline Danks, LarkOwl

‘This guide captures the essence of successful grants fundraising and is so well written the practical and well-informed advice jumps off the page. I also love the thoughtful analogies, examples and case studies that add depth to the information. If fundraisers follow Neela Jane’s wise suggestions, they will succeed.’

Amanda Delew, Director, Solid Management and Consultancy Services

‘Great content, amazing tips, fabulous insights... What a wonderful read! This book will certainly be an asset to anyone looking to secure grants funding and increase income for their organisation. In an increasingly competitive world of seeking support from grant-making trusts and foundations, fundraisers need to hone their skills and knowledge – this book will help you to do this.’

Gill Jolly, Director, Achieve Consultants Ltd

‘This is a fantastic how-to guide on fundraising from foundations and other funders, taking the reader step-by-step through a thorough process that will maximise your chances of successful grant fundraising. Neela Jane clearly knows her stuff and has tons of practical suggestions for developing those all-important relationships with your current and potential funders.’

Carol Mack, Chief Executive, Association of Charitable Foundations

‘A great guide to fundraising from grant-makers. Engaging and practical, this book provides a brilliant grounding in the art of relationship-based fundraising. A highly recommended read for any trust fundraiser!’

Geraldine Payne, Head of Philanthropy, Resurgo Trust

‘Neela Jane provides a complete 360-degree view of grants fundraising. With fresh and welcome perspectives on what grant-makers as well as grant-seekers want, the author calls out complaints that success is more about luck than judgement or that any efforts are dogged by power imbalances.

The book abounds with useful guidance and tools, including templates for the planning process, links to further resources and, crucially, advice on key issues such as data protection compliance. I strongly recommend it to all fundraisers aiming at a strong and more sustainable fundraising base for their organisation.’

Cathy Pharoah, Visiting Professor of Charity Funding, Bayes Business School, City, University of London

‘This gem of a book is a must-have for grant-seekers of all levels of expertise. Covering the basics for those new to the world of grants fundraising, it also contains a whole host of tips and advice for even the most experienced fundraisers.’

Natalie Prosser, Grove Cottage (Bishop’s Stortford Mencap)

‘Neela Jane’s book outlines all the necessary steps to conceive, plan and execute a successful grants fundraising programme. Clear and pragmatic principles are backed up by case studies and examples, putting the theory into real-life context. This is an essential read for those relatively new to building relationships with trusts and foundations and those that manage grants fundraising in their organisation. It is also useful to trustees, so they might better grasp the conditions under which fundraisers operate.’

Stuart Sherriff, CEO, Gryphon Research Ltd

‘Full of practical tips and colourful examples, this guide draws on the experience of many successful fundraisers alongside with Neela Jane’s own expertise. It is as helpful a reminder on best practice for a seasoned fundraiser as it is a step-by-step manual for someone setting out to raise money from grants for the first time.’

Beth Upton, CEO, Money Tree Fundraising

‘I loved this book! Neela Jane has written a practical guide full of helpful tips, tools and examples to help you build relationships with trusts and foundations and to succeed in the complex world of fundraising. Whether you’re just starting out or you’ve got some fundraising experience and want to keep improving, this book is full of ideas that will help.’

Rob Woods, Author and Fundraising Trainer

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To my Dad, who has spent his life making the world a better place and encouraging us to try to do the same.

And to Chris, who makes it better just by being in it.

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About the Fundraising Series

For hundreds, if not thousands, of years generous people have given of their resources to improve the lives of others. Underpinning that benevolence are the people who ask for support on behalf of causes and for those in need – the fundraisers. As a group, they are often little known and little celebrated, but they are a driving force in enabling others to express their philanthropy and experience the joy of giving.

Over the last century or so, fundraisers' work has become more and more professionalised. The role of the fundraiser is achieving professional recognition through the establishment of the Chartered Institute of Fundraising (CIOF), the development of fundraising education and a growing interest in codifying professional ethics. Rightly, fundraisers are increasingly acknowledged as having a particular set of skills, and their knowledge base is growing in size and scope.

This series aims to help fundraisers build their skills and grow professionally. Each volume addresses a key part in the spectrum of fundraising techniques. As fundraising evolves and develops, new titles in the series are added and old ones revised. Each title explores a particular fundraising activity: looks at the current best practice; helps establish future strategy; and, where relevant, considers the historical, ethical and theoretical context for that activity. The series offers something for anyone who is aspiring to be a professional fundraiser, whatever the size or type of their organisation or the stage of their career.

The Centre for Philanthropy at the University of Kent is proud to partner with the Directory of Social Change and CIOF in the development of the series, as part of our shared mission to open up insights from the academic world to practising fundraisers. We'd also like to pay tribute to fundraising academic Adrian Sargeant for his early championing and stewardship of the series.

This series wouldn't be possible without the hard work of many people from authors to contributors to the publishing team who shape the text; we thank everyone who has contributed to its development.

Dr Claire Routley
Dr Beth Breeze
Centre for Philanthropy
University of Kent

About the Directory of Social Change

At the Directory of Social Change (DSC), we believe that the world is made better by people coming together to serve their communities and each other. For us, an independent voluntary sector is at the heart of that social change and we exist to support charities, voluntary organisations and community groups in the work they do. Our role is to:

- **provide practical information** on a range of topics from fundraising to project management in both our printed publications and our e-books;
- **offer training** through public courses, events and in-house services;
- **research funders** and maintain a subscription database, *Funds Online*, with details on funding from grant-making charities, companies and government sources;
- **offer bespoke research** to voluntary sector organisations in order to evaluate projects, identify new opportunities and help make sense of existing data;
- **stimulate debate and campaign** on key issues that affect the voluntary sector, particularly to champion the concerns of smaller charities.

We are a registered charity ourselves but we self-fund most of our work. We charge for services, but cross-subsidise those which charities particularly need and cannot easily afford.

Visit our website www.dsc.org.uk to see how we can help you to help others and have a look at www.fundsonline.org.uk to see how DSC could improve your fundraising. Alternatively, call our friendly team at 020 4526 5995 to chat about your needs or drop us a line at cs@dsc.org.uk.

About the author

Neela Jane Stansfield is a major gifts fundraising specialist, with over 15 years' experience working with trusts, foundations and high-net-worth individuals. She is an Associate at Fundraising Training Ltd and has worked across the international development, health and education sectors, including at UNICEF UK, Marie Curie, the Stroke Association and Chatteris Educational Foundation in Hong Kong.

For six years, Neela Jane was Chair of the Trusts and Statutory Special Interest Group at the Chartered Institute of Fundraising (CIOF), leading a membership body of 4,000 grants fundraisers across the UK. She was also a board member and speaker for several years at the CIOF National Convention – the largest fundraising conference in Europe.

She holds a BSc in Psychology from the University of Nottingham and a diploma in fundraising from the CIOF, and has written about trusts and major gifts fundraising for *Third Sector* magazine and *The Guardian's* Voluntary Sector Network. She has also been a trustee for an international children's charity, Children in Crisis, and is currently a trustee for ATLEU – the Anti-Trafficking and Labour Exploitation Unit, working to provide safety, recovery and redress for victims of trafficking and modern slavery.

Neela Jane lives in Devon with her husband and three little people. In her spare time she loves going for a run (and taking part in the odd charity marathon), playing the piano and hiding in the cupboard eating chocolate biscuits when the kids aren't looking.

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This book would not have been possible without the input and support of many wonderful people.

Firstly, hugest thanks to John Martin and Gabi Zagnojute at the Directory of Social Change, for their fantastic help throughout and for asking me to write it in the first place! It has been such an enjoyable process working with you both, and with Hazel Bird (copy-editor extraordinaire).

A big thank you to Michael Norton and Mike Eastwood, who kindly lent the ideas from their book *Writing Better Fundraising Applications*, which was initially written thirty years ago. Much of the content of their book remains very relevant today and has been largely built upon within these chapters, particularly those looking at proposal development. I hope this book does justice to your original and brilliant work.

I am also indebted to Bill Bruty, who, as well as kindly writing the foreword, provided a plethora of research material to back up the ideas within these pages. I first met Bill as a graduate participant on his Grant-seeker Programme and more recently have had the pleasure of working alongside him at Fundraising Training Ltd. Just as he did those 15 or so years ago, he continues to inspire and make fundraising a lot of fun. Thank you for being such a support, Bill – you are often called a fundraising guru, and it's my privilege to also call you a great mentor and friend.

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University, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Sported, St John Ambulance, Sue Ryder, Trust for London and UNICEF UK.

Similarly, thank you to the wonderful grants fundraising community, many of whom kindly submitted their questions and challenges to inform the final chapter of this book; I have tried – and I hope succeeded! – to incorporate the answers to all of them at least somewhere within the book.

Finally, the biggest thank you goes to my husband Chris for his unfailing support and for encouraging me to take on this project even while we relocated across the country, moved house twice and had another baby all within the same year! You are a rockstar.

Foreword

Having been a fundraiser for over 35 years, for causes as varied as human rights in Tanzania and addressing the housing crisis in Manchester, I am passionate about grant-seeking. What other job can involve such fascinating journeys into the lives and motivations of the world's great philanthropists, while developing a thorough knowledge of and passion for the projects you are fundraising for? There are few other ways of fundraising that require such research and understanding of the cause and the donors, which is also rewarded by the relatively large size of the gifts.

Speaking truth to power and stimulating a moral response to a social issue is rewarding enough, but when there is a transfer of wealth that helps to address the problem in question too, the feeling is quite exhilarating – having savoured it once there is no turning back. In this definitive guide, Neela Jane shares her recipe for successful grant-seeking. It is based upon a non-judgemental and sincere understanding of the donors, mastery of the research skills and careful consideration of how you will reach your donors. Most grants are agreed between people where there is mutual understanding and respect, before any written proposal is even developed. After all, grant-seeking is not an accidental game.

Unlike many other guides on this subject, this book places the written proposal in its correct place. As it is the most tangible part of the process, we tend to become fixated on the importance of the proposal being perfect. But the final proposal document is merely the result of so much that has to be done in advance for any application to be read, let alone be successful. This book is bristling with proven techniques to ensure that your application will be eligible, accurate and memorable.

Although having been awarded a grant might feel like your work is done, Neela Jane reminds us that thanking, fulfilling your commitments and looking after donors is an essential phase of the grant-seeking journey.

This book is grounded in a profound belief in the justice inherent in grants fundraising. It should not be about self-effacing supplicants quietly grateful for money arriving from outside their communities. This is about informed partnerships and working together as equals to make our world a better place. We don't have to feel humble or apologetic for being fundraisers in search of a more just world.

Bill Bruty FCioF
Director, Fundraising Training Ltd

Grants fundraising in context

Introduction

Fundraising from grant-makers has long been big business for the charity sector, with around £3.5 billion of UK annual voluntary income coming from trusts and foundations alone.¹ That's almost one-sixth of all private giving to charities in the UK every year,² making it a major funding source upon which charities often heavily rely. The number of grant-makers around the world grows year on year,³ which is wonderful news for the future of charities and philanthropy. However, so too grows the number of grant-seekers. As well as traditional charities, other organisations now look for support from the same pots, with private and public sector bodies such as the NHS and a range of social enterprises vying for funds. Grants fundraising is therefore more competitive today than it has ever been and, consequently, perhaps all the more compelling.

Since the 2000s, economic ups and downs have had a huge effect on the sector. Financial recessions, banking crises, Brexit and the global COVID-19 pandemic have all significantly impacted charities from small to large, affecting their viability, their operational capacity and of course their ability to generate income. Both grant-makers and grant-seekers have played important parts in sustaining charities during these times, the former frequently coming to the aid of their grant recipients when required and the latter working to keep the lifeblood of their organisations flowing.

The funder–recipient relationship is therefore a critical one, needing careful attention and management. As we will see throughout this book, successful grants fundraising requires several stages and processes to give your charity the best chance of a long-lasting and mutually beneficial funding partnership. Before we dive into these processes, it is helpful to take a look at the types of grant-maker we are talking about and where this important part of the charity sector has its roots.

Terminology: what's in a name?

The words used in grants fundraising can be as varied, and sometimes as confusing, as the diversity of funding itself. Different organisations may use particular terms or phrases in the way they talk about the money they give or raise (and how they go about giving or raising it), depending on which part of the sector they are in and which part of the world they operate in. For the purposes of this book, we will stick to particular words for

simplicity, but it is worth noting the various other terms that are widely used in the sector.

Grant-makers

This book predominantly uses the term ‘grant-makers’, or ‘funders’ for a little variety. This is simply because the range of grant-making organisations out there is enormous, and yet the processes explored in the following chapters are relevant to almost all types. Grant-makers, as described here, are organisations that fund charitable activities, whether these are a charity’s core running costs, specific projects or direct services to help individuals. Grant-makers therefore include charitable trusts and foundations, institutional funding bodies, statutory funding pots, people who give via family foundations and, increasingly, companies that fund charities through their own corporate foundations. Essentially, grant-making in this context includes any organisation that usually requires a proposal as part of its distribution of charitable grants.

In the UK, grant-makers often use the terms ‘charitable trust’ and ‘charitable foundation’ in reference to themselves fairly interchangeably. In practice, ‘trust’ is a term used more within the UK and ‘foundation’ tends to be more widely used in the USA and across Europe. Other commonly used names are ‘settlement’ and ‘charity’ (for example, The ABC Charitable Settlement or The XYZ Charity), but these are generally synonymous with trusts and foundations and the variation usually stems from the different ways they were originally set up. To further complicate the picture, not all trusts and foundations actually make grants; some use their income to finance their own charitable operations and some do grant-making alongside their own service delivery. Throughout the book, therefore, you will find ‘grant-makers’ and ‘funders’ used in reference to those that distribute grants to other charities, and ‘grant-seekers’ and ‘fundraisers’ used in reference to those that seek out their support.

Proposals

There are lots of different words for a written fundraising proposition, but for ease we will use the word ‘proposal’. The terms ‘application’, ‘appeal’ or ‘case for support’ could just as easily be used (although ‘case for support’ can also refer to a more generalised document) and indeed are often used quite interchangeably by both funders and fundraisers alike. Some may argue that applications are more formal and detailed documents, and that proposals are a briefer overview of an organisation or project’s funding needs. Others might contest that the words are dependent upon the style and geographical location of the funder – that UK grant-makers tend to refer to applications and those in the USA talk more about proposals. Others again may prefer to use different terms altogether, such

Finding your funders

Introduction

It is a common experience for fundraisers to have someone well-meaning come over, drop a copy of the Sunday Times Rich List¹ on their desk and say, ‘Let’s ask these folks for money!’ While this might not be the most strategic way to go about it, what they are referring to is the hunt for prospects – the prospective funders who could potentially support your organisation’s work.

Before you begin searching for prospects, it is essential to identify your specific funding needs. What do you need money for, when do you need it and how much do you need? This has to be worked out irrespective of what you think a grant-maker would *like* to support or what might sound like an attractive proposition. Once you are clear on these initial details, then you are ready to begin finding funders.²

It is worth noting that finding funders is the first stage of the approach cycle (see figure 1.1), rather than writing a proposal first and then looking for a funder to fit around it. The least ideal scenario is using a mail merge to fill in the name of the funder on a pre-written document and then just sending it off. Funders recognise these blanket mailings a mile off, and this approach tends to neither endear you to the recipient nor result in many grants. It is much more effective to develop a proposal for your specific funder from the outset. (Note that this is different from developing a project or programme for a specific funder – something we will look at in chapter 9; see page 150.)

There are two research stages – this initial prospecting stage and the more in-depth funder research stage, which we will explore in chapter 3. As such, chapter 3 is about understanding whom you are applying to, while this chapter is about finding them in the first place.

Identifying your prospects

Prospect research is the fuel that powers the engine that is fundraising. It informs our approach at all points in the building of a relationship. It is also key to building our new business pipeline, which we seek to match based on our needs and the interests of potential partners. The appropriate fit, reputational alignment and ethical considerations are all informed by our prospecting.

Jhumar Johnson, Chief of Staff to the
Vice-Chancellor, The Open University

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Grants Fundraising

Grants fundraising is a significant and highly competitive income source for charities, contributing over £3 billion of income from UK trusts and foundations alone. This guide shows you how to maximise the value of grants fundraising for your charity. By adopting a holistic view of fundraising, it takes into account all of the elements of the grant-seeking process rather than over-focusing on the proposal-writing stage. It will help you:

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- Find and understand your funders
- Plan your approach
- Build the relationship with grant-makers
- Develop your proposal and submit the ask
- Establish good stewardship
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