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Fundraising as organisational knowing in practice: Evidence from the arts and higher education in the UK

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This paper argues for the centrality of organisational practices in occupational learning with a case study of fundraising in the non-profit UK's arts and higher education sectors. Despite the need to increase charitable giving to non-profit organisations, little is known about the work, fundraisers must do in order to carry out their jobs. We argue that fundraisers develop strategic understandings and competences within organisational environments, which they put into practice in their relationships with stakeholders within and outside the organisations where they work. Our findings suggest that one of the main ways in which fundraisers learn is by negotiating and surmounting obstacles both internally, within their organisational environments and externally, around the perception of fundraising as a profession. We thus argue for the importance of establishing a "fundraising culture" within organisational environments; a shared organisational competence where fundraising is practiced as a legitimate and strategic type of practice.

KEYWORDS
arts, fundraising, higher education, knowing-in-practice, professionalisation

1 | INTRODUCTION

The UK's non-profit sector has received notable public and policy attention in recent years due to an increasing withdrawal of public funding from central government and local authorities since 2010. The resulting reliance on fundraised income has led to an increased interest into the motivations for charitable giving, as evidenced in the publication of generic and sector-based reports (Arts Council of England, 2019; Lloyd, 2006; Universities UK, 2014). However, this has not been coupled with an understanding of the work involved in fundraising philanthropic income, despite arguments that donations primarily occur as a result of fundraisers working with donors (Breeze, 2017; Bryant, Jeon-Slaughter, Kang, & Tax, 2003; Gunstone & Ellison, 2017). Textbooks on fundraising go some way towards filling in this gap. Usually written from a marketing or management orientation, they are designed to help fundraisers "get the work done" (Holman & Sargent, 2006; Lloyd, 2006; Sargeant &

Jay, 2014). However, their pragmatic approach means that they rarely interrogate and reflect on the nature of fundraising practices (Aldrich, 2016; Breeze, 2017; Daly, 2013).

This article contributes to an emerging but promising field of research that seeks to understand how fundraisers carry out their work (Aldrich, 2016; Breeze, 2017; Daly, 2013). We draw upon a practice-based studies perspective that takes practice, rather than actors, as the locus of analysis and argues that knowledge is always emergent and inherent in practice. By applying this perspective to the work fundraisers do, we seek to understand how fundraisers carry out their job in organisational environments and the specific types of knowing inherent in their fundraising practices. This interpretation positions fundraising not as a set of rules and guidelines to be learnt (Sargeant & Jay, 2014), nor as a disposition of actors (Bourdieu, 1984), but as a form of knowledge, or knowing-in-practice, that is embedded, emerging and inherent to practice/s (Billett, 2001; Gherardi, 2000, 2009; Ibert, 2007; Nicolini et al., 2003; Orlikowski, 2002; Schatzki et al., 2001).

The practice-based studies perspective has been particularly fruitful in studying the work of organisational actors with specific attention given to technical and science workers (Nicolini, 2011; Orlikowski, 2002) and consultants (Hargadon & Becky, 2006). We contribute to the ongoing interest in organisational types of work with a study of fundraisers working in arts and higher education organisations in the UK based upon 31 semi-structured interviews. Our initial analysis is informed by Orlikowski's (2002) classification of organisational practices and their related knowledges, which help us map out the sets of practices involved in philanthropic fundraising. Our data also points at the importance of those practices which fundraisers envision to be part of their professionalisation and/or the acquisition of a professional standards and a sense of identity (Breeze, 2017; Daly, 2013).[1]

The article is divided into three parts. In Section 2, we introduce the practice-based studies perspective which we argue is a valuable approach to understanding how fundraising practices are linked to the emergence and formulation of knowledge about how to fundraise effectively. Section 3 introduces our data set and methodological aspects of our analysis. Section 4 identifies the specific practices and types of knowing constituted in the practices and argues that fundraisers' work is best characterised as an ongoing attempt at relationship building and conflict negotiation. It is by continuously engaging in these forms of balancing acts that fundraisers learn how to build up long-term relationships and how to negotiate, even if not always resolve, conflicts. Finally, the article argues that professionalising, rather than profession, best describes how fundraisers perceive and interpret their work, a balancing act by which gaining external public recognition is pursued alongside the practicality of gaining knowledge about "how they get the job done."

2 | THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: FUNDRAISING-AS-KNOWING IN PRACTICE

Since its emergence in the 1990s, the perspective known as practice-based studies has increasingly become one of the established ways of analysing how learning occurs within organisational environments (Billett, 2001; Gherardi, 2000, 2009; Ibert, 2007; Nicolini et al., 2003; Orlikowski, 2002; Schatzki et al., 2001). Indicating a shift from individuals and their actions towards an understanding of knowledge as inherent in practice, practice-based studies takes a processual view of organisations (also referred to as organising) and of knowledge. If organisations are made up of "connections between and among actions," it is the study of such connections and actions that illustrates how knowing is sustained in practice and manifests itself through practice. Thus, knowledge occurs in and through action, through organising. It is always situated, negotiated and embedded, rather than a stable disposition of actors. Only when practices become "stabilised," organised around shared practical understandings, can they facilitate the construction of actors' identities (Czarniawska, 2013:14).

A seminal example of the practice-based studies perspective is Orlikowski's (2002) analysis of development activities in a large software company based in the Netherlands. She argues that the collective competence of knowing how to deliver timely innovative and complex products is not to be found in a specific technology, strategy, a leader, or even a set design or production skills. Instead, competence is an "ongoing accomplishment, a situationally enacted capability" that is best captured by a repertoire of five practices: sharing identity, interacting face to face, aligning effort, learning by doing and supporting participation (2002:267). Such practices, however, are not to be treated in isolation from each other; they "overlap and interact" (2002:257). When members engage in specialised training, they are building social networks through the practice of face to face interaction and they are also engaging in the practice of sharing the organisation's identity. All aspects of the five practices, individually or in group, share a capacity to help organisational members navigate and negotiate multiple boundaries in the accomplishment of their development activities. However, Orlikowski's analysis also shows that practices can have the opposite effect when they inhibit, rather than enact collective knowing, or when "not-knowing occurs"; for example, learning by doing can be lost when staff turnover hinders it, and "interacting face to face" can lead to burnout of those involved (2002:257).

Research on fundraisers in the UK lends empirical insights into some of the practices describe in Orlikowski's (2002) study. In her comprehensive study of fundraisers, Breeze (2017) suggests that there is a high element of "learning by doing" in contemporary fundraising jobs. As she quotes from one of her interviewees: "fundraising can be taught but you also learn by just getting on with it, ideally alongside older hands who've been there and done that" (as quoted in Breeze, 2017:94). However, another assumption equally prevalent is that in order to "professionalise" fundraising, fundraisers must learn first and foremost "a distinct knowledge base acquired through sustained periods of training and education" (2017:168).

Daly's research on fundraisers in higher education argues that negotiating boundaries is a central aspect of fundraisers' work. Such negotiations involve the cultivation of specific "professional identities" which not only help fundraisers address challenges specific to their working environment, but they also "inform and shape (directors of development) philanthropic fundraising" (2013:21). Daly makes a clear connection between the directors' ongoing understanding of "how to act" in a professional manner, in this case by adopting a "professional identity," and how such understanding informs and shapes how they act in practice, in their philanthropic fundraising. The implications for such research insights on fundraising are clear: fundraisers do learn (about their job) by doing their job. That is, fundraising as a practice is far from static, it is shaped and informed by how fundraisers act in their jobs. In what follows, we continue to investigate the links between practice and learning with the help of a dataset of interviews carried out with fundraisers in the UK.

3 | RESEARCH CONTEXT AND DESIGN

In this study, we applied Orlikowski's (2002) perspective on knowing in practice with a specific emphasis on how fundraisers "get things

done" within their non-profit organisational settings. Our aim was to identify a set of practices specific to how fundraisers learn about their work to then discuss some of the research results and their implications for future research in fundraising studies.

The study draws upon data initially collected from two research projects on fundraising, which were then combined into one dataset including 31 semi-structured interviews with fundraisers in the arts and higher education sectors carried out between 2014 and 2016. As a way to contextualise our data set, we address some of the differences and similarities between both fundraising sectors.

The main similarity between the arts and higher education is that they receive the lowest percentage of individual donations of the total giving in the UK with only 2%—followed by sports and recreation at 1% (UK Giving, 2019). This suggests that attracting new donors and engaging with existing ones is a long-term priority for fundraisers. In both sectors, most giving comes from individuals accounting for 88% of all donors in higher education institutions (Ross-CASE, 2019) and 43% for the arts and culture (Arts Council of England, 2019). Despite these initial similarities, there is great variation between sectors, especially in the amount donated and the type of donor cohort each attracts. In the arts, 90% of donations are in the low and mid-level range (less than £500). Donors are usually core audience members and committed arts attendees, while their giving is motivated by being asked directly to give, with Gift Aid as the most popular tax scheme (Arts & Business and City University London, 2009). By contrast between 2007 and 2017, higher education has regularly been listed as one of the recipients of the most million-pound donations at 600 over the 10-year period (Coutts Institute, 2017), and of the second highest value of donations at £4.79bn. In the same 10-year survey, arts, culture and heritage received donations worth £1.04bn and 270 1 million £ plus donations (Coutts Institute, 2017). The main donors to higher education are former students; in 2017–18 the percentage of alumni donors was 75% (Ross-CASE, 2019). This difference in connection and affiliation to the organisation they donate to could also explain the differences in levels of donations between sectors. One further difference is that of the fundraising trajectory in each sector: most universities in the UK have been actively fundraising for the past decade or more, and thus fundraisers work in well-established development offices (Ross-CASE, 2009). By contrast, fundraising in the arts sector is still a relatively new practice, with 61% of arts organisations reporting not to have "sufficient capacity or time to engage with private fundraising activities" (Arts Council of England, 2019:28).

Given that our data sets originated from different research projects, it is relevant to reflect on our initial idea to amalgamate both data into one data set. Data was collected by semi-structured interviews with fundraisers carried out by author 1 in the arts and author 2 in higher education. In both cases, interview questions were of an exploratory nature, designed to understand how fundraisers carried out their work most effectively. Interview questions with arts fundraisers were designed to identify the work fundraisers do and prioritise in a context of government funding cuts. Similarly, the higher education interview questions were designed to understand how fundraisers carry out their work, with a focus on their responses and

impressions on the role of philanthropy within their organisation, and to the implementation of government legislation on favourable tax policies. Overall, in both projects, there was enough specificity towards understanding fundraising in relation to the needs and issues affecting the sectors to have avoided a bias towards collecting data that would prioritise generic, rather than fundraising-based, organisational practices.

The arts fundraising project included 16 interviews with individuals working as fundraisers in arts organisations including visual arts (4), performance arts (7) and museums (3). Two further interviewees were included in the sample through snowball sampling following recommendations from other interviewees. Their perspectives on fundraising in the arts were particularly valuable as situated interpretations of the key issues affecting the sector (one of the interviewees had experience of working in both the arts and higher education sectors). All interviews were face-to-face, with only two exceptions where the interviews were carried out by telephone. The majority of interviewees worked in the North of England (13) with a small number of interviews conducted in London (3). The size of fundraising teams was varied. Some organisations did not have a specific department devoted to fundraising, and the role was distributed amongst individuals in the organisation. Others had large fundraising teams and a long trajectory of attracting individual and corporate philanthropy. Most of the interviewees worked in organisations that fell in-between these two extremes, with an average of 3–4 individuals involved in fundraising. Interviews in higher education were part of a study seeking to understand how fundraisers respond to the implementation of central government policies to stimulate fundraising. A total of 15 face-to-face interviews were conducted. Eleven interviewees worked in "senior fundraising" roles; broadly defined here as individuals in charge of the fundraising function within their institution and who also asked potential donors for donations. Also included in the sample were four interviews conducted with fundraising "experts." These were included in the sample through snowball sampling following recommendations from other fundraisers. Their opinions provided valuable insights and views into the sector's performance, while also being somehow more detached from any internal relationships or departmental objectives than other interviewees.

For the purpose of this combined data set, all identifiable characteristics and names were anonymised. We also concentrated on the part of the data that most accurately represented the orientation of our research which was to identify the specific practices that facilitated fundraisers' learning. Thus, we focused on issues around how their organisational environment facilitated or hindered the performance of their job, how they negotiated any obstacles and the conditions that led to effective, successful fundraising in their everyday jobs.

4 | ANALYSIS

The remainder of this paper maps out Orlikowski's (2002) approach to "knowing in practice" against fundraisers' working practices as

TABLE 1 Selected evidence on fundraising practices and fundraising knowledge constituted in the practice. Adapted from Orlikowski (2002)

Practice (Orlikowski, 2002)	Fundraising activities comprising the practice	Fundraising knowing constituted in the practice	Selected data
1-sharing identity/interactions Identifying organisational boundaries	Engaging with inherited organisational structures where fundraising might not be a priority	Knowing how to lead a fundraising team: Gaining legitimacy for leadership in fundraising	Development and fundraising have not necessarily always been at the top of the agenda, so it has been a very hard battle over the years to put that out there... It is only in the last 5 or so years that has been pushed up to become a director-led position, and it is now a role in the senior management. So I lead a team that is growing, but for a lot of years it was only me (FRARTS,2)
	Planning supportive environment where philanthropic and commercial income can co-exist	Knowing importance of organisational coordination: Relationship building fundraising/marketing operations	A focus of planning post-crash ...we need to focus more on selling tickets, so that's not part of my gameplan, I'm over in development, but there is a certain element of developing and marketing not being together, that's part of what I inherited, which I think's a shame, because that earned income and non-grant income streams should really be working together (FRARTS, 1)
	Reconciling inter-departmental divergences where membership fundraising is not a priority nor understood	Knowing how to work effectively across departments and understand conflicts: Supporting and reciprocating members in their giving	We call them patrons, but internally there has been a lot of conflict between marketing and development as to what a membership scheme actually is. Our marketing team do not understand fundraising. We have two schemes, a lot of it is inherited, and it is working our way out of it (FRARTS, 2)
2-negotiating and aligning efforts Using common model, method and standard metrics	Reacting to cuts in government funding: Changing organisational perceptions about the benefits of fundraising	Knowing how to coordinate through aligning effort over time and space: Setting up an organisational culture of fundraising; spreading core messages encouraging philanthropy within organisation	It's changing the culture. So I am right in saying the cuts one of the things they have caused, is that organisations need to change their culture in terms of fundraising and how they think about it, and where it happens within your organisation, it does not just happen within your team (FRARTS,1)
	Conveying and educating colleagues about how to optimise philanthropic giving: Matching donors' personal interests with recipients' strategic priorities	Knowing how to develop long-term fundraising capabilities interacting with donors over time and what tools are best used (i.e., direct marketing, personalised letters, phone calls, invitations to events, 1–2-1 meetings, introducing beneficiaries who say "thank you")	One of the challenges for director of development is that philanthropy is seen as in a very instrumentalist way so ... the way in which fundraisers would see philanthropy is how do you match the donor's interests and the strategic interest of the university. The university senior group professionals ... will think we got a cash gap this year but these buildings are going up, we need money now, so they are driven very much by the need now ... It's about relationship, you have to give time you cannot just go and ask for money from people out of the blue (FRHE, 3)
	Planning long-term fundraising capabilities and strategic priorities	Knowing how to interact with donors and how to reciprocate: Identifying risk-takers philanthropists with no entitlement to benefits	We have also instigated a new work group, we had a small group of people who were probably keen on giving ... to just feel closer to the work, but not to

TABLE 1 (Continued)

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Practice (Orlikowski, 2002)	Fundraising activities comprising the practice	Fundraising knowing constituted in the practice	Selected data
			receive any benefits … that is to support the development of new work, that work might not make it to the stage, this is about them supporting us to be creative and explore what the opportunity might be (FRARTS, 7).
3-learning by doing Investing mentoring rewarding	Investing in new staff	Knowing how to develop capabilities by aligning staff's skills and recruitment of artistic director with fundraising priorities	(the organisation) was vulnerable to the cuts, but that's because it wasn't delivering impact in the way that it is now … we have also diversified our fundraising team, we have been able to do that because we had a donor who gave a six figure gift to help the development team and that basically expanded the team from six people to nine, and that comes back to the artistic vision (FRARTS, 9)
	Investing in individual skill development through ongoing external networks	Knowing how to choose adequate level of training: Accessing specialist external networks	In terms of skill sharing … I mean the world of HE is well supported by network bodies so there is a very large global training and development organisation, CASE (Council for the Advancement and Support in education) … then there is great networks for people at different levels … there is a network for people like me, for directors of development, there is a network for people who head up trust and foundations fundraising in higher education (FRARTS, 4)
	Developing long-term donor relationships within match funding scheme developing sector-focused donor relationships	Learning how to meet donors expectations in new policy environment that leads to short-termism learning how to balance sector-lead fundraising needs with donors stewardship	We got the matched funding and we were doing really well, and then (it) went after the three year period … we lost the matched funding and a quarter of our capacity … some of the donors who had given with the knowledge that they were actually going to be supported 50% decided that well if there's no matched funding anymore I might think again about where I place my philanthropic funding (FRHE, 11) in theory it should make your role as a fundraiser a little easier … but I think at the same time it kinda makes it a bit more difficult because I think there is a higher expectation of what philanthropy can do and what it needs to achieve. There is a higher standard (FRHE. 13) The arts sector loves memberships, and it loves plans, and it loves different types of semi-precious stones, gold, silver, bronze, diamonds and sapphire. We had a membership program but we could not claim as gift aid. So I closed the program down and fundamentally started a program that is a giving program. You do not get specific benefits back (FRARTS, 5)

identified across the two sectors. We have revised her initial division into five practices into a classification of three fundraising-based practices: sharing identity/interaction with colleagues, negotiating efforts and learning by doing (see Table 1). In Table 2, we refer to those practices whose specific aim was to acquire professional knowledge and fundraising skills.

4.1 | Sharing identity/interactions: Setting up a supportive fundraising environment; engaging with inherited structures; coordinating and reconciling organisational differences

Plans and activities involved in soliciting and raising funds require an input from a range of people within a given organisation. Usually fundraisers taken upon the role of facilitator: working internally with colleagues and externally with donors. The level of involvement often varies from donor to donor, project to project and from organisation to organisation. Fundraisers often manage such relationships across teams, departments and sometimes organisations. One of the main challenges they face is that of working within organisations where fundraising may not be a priority.

Internally, fundraising in higher education is often managed by fundraisers in a separate department who are not linked to academic divisions such as departments, faculties and specialist research centres. They depend on the co-operation and support from senior managers and academics to carry out their role effectively and promptly. In the absence of such support, fundraisers may be less effective in connecting with colleagues and donors than in organisations, where fundraising is a core aspect of their strategic direction and mission.

A challenge fundraisers face is that of connecting donors' wishes with institutional priorities. Table 1 shows the identification of internal

TABLE 2 Selected evidence on perceptions of fundraising as a professional practice and skill development. Adapted from Orlikowski (2002)

Practice	Fundraising activities comprising the practice	Fundraising knowing constituted in the practice	Selected data fundraising as a professional practice
1-sharing identity	Understanding changes in external perceptions of fundraisers	Knowing about fundraising as an evolving identity and profession	I think it is becoming a profession, the professionalisation is really how it is perceived by others, really this is what determines whether it is a profession and I think it is now becoming more recognised. Certainly, in the last 20 years if you said you to somebody you were a fundraiser people would look blankly and they would not understand what that meant, nowadays if you talk about a job if you say I am fundraiser, people have heard about it, it has an identity which I think it is something about a profession, if it has an identity in the public's minds (FRARTS, 4)
2-aligning efforts	Matching fundraising with similar professions	Knowing about how to gain occupational legitimacy for fundraising	To represent in communications terms the interest of fundraising as a professional activity that is essential to the development of the third sector and, lastly, I would say to enable the fundraising profession to talk on a professional level with other professional organisations in related spheres, such as chief executives, such as communications and marketing people (FRARTS, 7)
3-learning by doing	Investing in skill development through external networks	Knowing how to match organisational needs with shortage of experienced fundraising staff	There are just not good enough good quality alumni relation staff/fundraisers/development operations people around … it's going to take them five years to really learn and really become good. If you have got experience you are coming to an organisation that's gone through a lot of period of change … some people will like the challenge but if you are experienced you might not (FRHE, 3)
	Sharing knowledge on fundraising	Knowing how to network to further develop fundraising skills	People can meet people from different organisations, so that they can share knowledge, they can share best practice, they can share problems and they can communicate inside a profession which is also misunderstood, not only inside organisations, but amongst the general public (FRARTS, 9)

organisational boundaries as a key part of sharing identity. In some of the universities researched, finance departments perceive philanthropy as a mechanism through which a cash gap can be filled, as one interviewee explains: "We got a cash gap this year, but these buildings are going up. We need money now, so they (the organisation) are driven very much by the need now" (FRHE, 3). Such perception, however, obliterates an understanding of the long-term a priori work fundraisers must carry out before a donation can be sought; for example, building relationships with potential donors and identifying the projects they want to support. Our data shows that even though fundraisers attempt to use a common fundraising model across the organisation, built on the importance of developing long-term fundraising capabilities, this is not always the case. Departments are driven by different priorities, for example, financial versus educational, and a lack of understanding of what fundraising entails, are some of the internal boundaries fundraisers have to work with and overcome in order to carry out their work effectively.

Fundraisers have a clear understanding of the mismatch between the workings of philanthropic donations, and organisational expectations that see these as a way of filling a cash gap. This type of knowing emerges out of their attempts to use a common fundraising model across the organisation based on an alignment of individual wishes with organisational priorities. In such a context, interactions with colleagues are thus not always necessarily smooth. In the arts dataset, fundraisers described their interactions with other teams as challenging, especially between marketing and fundraising teams. The realisation of such challenge leads to learning, as one fundraiser put it, that "earned income and non-grant income streams should really be working together" (FRARTS, 1). This finding resonates with the challenge fundraisers face in higher education where they are faced with a downplaying of raising funds which is not seen as a priority. In both instances, fundraisers successfully identify internal challenges caused by either conflicting interests and/or lack of understanding of their practice. An arts fundraiser refers to the definitional struggle between marketing and fundraising over what a membership scheme actually is because the "marketing team does not understand fundraising." Even though fundraisers may not be able to know the cause of such obstacles, except for the realisation that "a lot of it is inherited" (FRARTS, 2), the learning lies in their awareness of the problem and the importance of organisational coordination and of the importance of "working our way out of it," that is, working effectively across department through relationship building. This is particularly important when the support and reciprocating of members in their giving might be at stake, as in the example seen here.

In some instances, however, fundraisers know how to work across these barriers. A key strategy fundraisers use is that of participating at regular meetings to interact with concerned parties. In these contexts, they are able to identify opportunities to showcase philanthropy and the importance of fundraising, apart from knowing what is going on in the organisation. Working across an organisation's teams and departments helps fundraisers form a sense of knowing their playing field and remit. They continuously change how they collaborate to make fundraising successful. When knowledge about the importance of organisational coordination in fundraising is shared at senior management levels, it can lead to a wider recognition of fundraising within the organisation and to becoming part of a senior management team. An arts fundraiser describes the learning process of gaining legitimacy for leadership in fundraising that eventually led to it being a senior management role supported by a "team that is growing" as the result of a "very hard battle over the years to put that out there" (FRARTS,2). Overall, there are consequences for the barriers and regular adjustment of a fundraiser's position which can be time and resource consuming for an organisation, but they can also lead to positive changes for individual fundraisers and for fundraising more generally.

4.2 | Negotiating and aligning efforts: Changing organisational perceptions; optimising philanthropic giving

The implementation of government cuts to arts organisations' budgets, and of the match-funding scheme to universities were externally driven challenges which led fundraisers to plan strategically how to optimise their fundraising capabilities. Arts fundraisers are very aware of the influence trustees can have on their work, but these does not stop them from seeking "agreement on all sides." An arts fundraiser mentioned the need to critically evaluate the benefits of raising £1,000 in exchange for a monthly report four-pages long. By critically evaluating the dis-advantages of charitable trusts fundraising, it was eventually deemed not "financially worthwhile" (FRARTS, 3). Internal negotiations also take place in occasions when fundraisers seek to showcase the relevance of their work. An interviewee expressed the increasing importance fundraising plays in his/her arts organisation where everyone is needed to support fundraising activity. Interviewees, especially in the higher education sector, recognised the increasing importance of leadership in promoting the role philanthropy can play in their organisations. As one interviewee noted, attitudes are changing as there has been more awareness especially at top senior levels about the fact that "philanthropy brings all kinds of benefits" (FRHE, 5) not only financial but also in terms of the reputation it can bring to an organisation. A similar issue was raised by an arts fundraiser who explained how fundraising needed to be understood better at organisational level, otherwise there could be cuts: "people have a responsibility to do our best because if we fall short in fundraising that money has to be made up somewhere else or we have to make cuts somewhere" (FRARTS, 3).

Senior fundraisers in higher education institutions play a key role in promoting the importance of fundraising and of philanthropic donations, especially amongst academic staff who could help with the solicitation process. Fundraisers would report on examples where new leaders' attitudes changed across the institutions, including academics. In one particular example, a "new leader" had spent time and effort "building bridges across the entire institution and changing attitudes" (FRHE, 1). This type of knowledge and understanding also

required alignment across other parts of the organisation, such as leaders of "key departments," "professors" and even "post-doctoral researchers." For all these constituents, it was crucial they knew that fundraising is "part of their job" (FRHE, 1).

It is important to understand the role of institutional belief in philanthropy and the role of academics in either promoting or obstructing such practice. An interviewee raised this issue as an ongoing problem of internal boundaries that needed rectifying: "there wasn't institutional buy-in all the way across from our academic colleagues about what it took to do fundraising ... it was still seen as something that development was something over here" (FRHE, 1). A key challenge is to develop sustainable, long-term relationships with donors which can sometimes conflict with organisational perceptions of philanthropy "in a very instrumentalist way" (FRHE, 3). And yet, an awareness of the need to match donors' personal interests with a university's strategy leads to learning about how to develop long-term fundraising capabilities. Fundraisers must work tirelessly to encourage philanthropic giving, and the importance of individual philanthropists to their organisation. This sentiment also resonates with the views and experiences of arts fundraisers. In both sectors, fundraisers understand that an awareness of fundraising at organisational level is crucial; without the support and understanding of artistic directors or academic colleagues, fundraising ambitions cannot easily happen.

4.3 | Learning by doing: Investing in new staff and skill development; accessing external stakeholder networks; developing long-term and sector-focused donor relationships in challenging environments

Investing in individual skill development, mentoring employees through external networks, are ways in which fundraisers demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of how develop their own individual capabilities and the fundraising potential of their organisations. For fundraisers, a lot of learning about how to effectively carry out their jobs takes place via networks within and across sectors. Both the arts and higher education sectors have key organisations that provide training and skills development.

A key finding in our data was that by accessing existing regional and national networks and/or training events across sectors fundraisers learnt about how to develop capabilities, their own and those of others. The amount of networking and recognition of its importance has increased over recent years. A fundraiser was optimistic about the growing importance of "networking" within the third sector, even though this was a well-established practice in the private sector. In particular, it was the sharing of problems and making connections that improved the support accessible to fundraisers. On occasions, fundraisers seek specific guidance about how to be strategic from colleagues in similar organisations. This was the case of an arts fundraiser who now specialises in trusts and foundations fundraising after receiving advice from a colleague that this is "far more the way to go than spend more time on corporate sponsorship or individuals" (FRARTS,6).

In the higher education sector, a range of training is available and made use of. One interviewee indicated the importance of CASE, a global networking and training organisation However, the lack of a strong network. Which included academics, and not only fundraisers was a problem in higher education organisations, as an experienced fundraiser with experience in both the arts and higher education noted by saying that "the director of development would find it very helpful to have a strong peer network, if they work in a university" (FRARTS, 4). Another form of investment is that of recruiting key individuals. An interviewee in the arts noted how tailored recruitment can make an organisation less vulnerable to funding cuts. The appointment of a new artistic director has not only given the organisation an artistic vision that delivers impact, but also, in so doing, enabled the diversification of its fundraising streams. In particular, the appointment attracted a donation to fund the expansion of the development team from 6 to 9 people (FRARTS, 9).

But the most challenging aspect which fundraisers learnt from experience was that of developing long-term relationships with donors in the context of a matched funding scheme. Any given amount donated to participating higher education institutions was matched by 50% through the government's fund. However, one fundraiser recalls how the scheme threatened existing donor relations, especially in those cases when the end of the incentive discouraged donors from giving again. As one fundraiser explains a donor's response: "if there's no matched funding anymore I might think again about where I place my philanthropic funding" (FRHE, 11). Similarly, another fundraiser referred to the scheme as making "your role as a fundraiser a little bit easier" and also more difficult due to donors' higher standards on "what philanthropy can do and what it needs to achieve" (FRHE, 13).

4.4 | Gaining legitimacy for fundraising as a professional practice

Our analysis identified a further challenge fundraisers faced in their everyday work: the need to gain legitimacy in their professional development by acquiring relevant knowledge and skills. Table 2 illustrates examples of this practice. Even though interviewees differed in their views about whether fundraising was a profession -some definitely described fundraising as a profession, while others were hesitant and described it as having some professional elements – they all shared an understanding of the importance to advance their skills through training and mentoring.

Gaining knowledge about fundraising as a profession comes from the interaction between fundraisers and other non-fundraisers. An interviewee describes how in the past, people "would look blankly and they would not understand what that meant" when s/he would refer to fundraising as a profession. However, at present, this perception has changed: "if you say I am a fundraiser ... it has an identity which I think it is something about a profession" (FRARTS, 4). It is in his/her interaction with other people that the fundraiser gains external reassurance about the status of his/her work as being a profession, as s/

he notes, "if it had an identity in the public's minds" (FRARTS, 4). This observation contrasts with some of the other examples where "profession" was mainly described as "professionalisation" a form of knowledge gained in externally organised interactions - networking opportunities and training events—with other fundraisers. An interviewee described fundraising as a profession because fundraisers "get paid more than museum directors" (FRARTS, 3). This was different, the interviewee noted, from the past when the fundraiser "was an old marketing guy and it was all very clubby" (FRARTS, 3). This comment illustrates how within organisational environments, fundraisers are struggling to gain legitimacy for the work they do; this is due to its lack of professional status vis-à-vis other types of more established occupations such as marketing. Another interviewee describes his/her understanding of fundraising as a professional activity insofar as fundraisers can "talk on a professional level" with other professional occupations, such as "chief executives" and "communications and marketing people" (FRARTS, 6). The most mentioned practice has to do with investing time in common training and the development of skills through participation in external networks. Fundraisers can gain an understanding of proposed changes in regulation and "codes of practice" by attending online webinars. Also important was attendance to organised meetings; as one interviewee put it: when fundraisers "can share knowledge, they can share practice, they can share problems and they can communicate" (FRARTS, 7). This is particularly important, the fundraiser notes, because fundraising is a profession that is "misunderstood, not only inside organisations, but amongst the general public" (FRARTS, 7). Acknowledging the value of redressing external perceptions for their work reiterates how an important part of what fundraisers do is dealing with obstacles, negotiating and, when possible, finding solutions to overcome them. We shall return to the topic of surmounting obstacles as a key part of what fundraisers do in the discussion below.

5 | DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this research, the aim was to investigate an understudied area within the field of non-profit fundraising; the fundraisers and how they learn about their occupation through their practice in specific organisational and sectorial environments. We conceptualised fundraisers' everyday work practices as examples of "knowing-in-practice" and focused on some of the challenges they faced in two sectors, the arts and higher education. In the arts fundraisers developed practices to cope with government cuts to their funding and in higher education fundraisers established parameters to help them implement government-led policy to incentivise giving. While some of the data referred specifically to how fundraisers dealt with challenges, we found that this was only a small part of what they do in their everyday work. A large part of our interviews was trying to understand and make sense of how fundraisers negotiate their organisational environment in order to successfully raise income. We aimed to make two contributions to existing research; an advancement of the conceptual knowledge of knowing in practice for

fundraising, and an empirical contribution to how fundraisers build a "collective knowing" or competence that is enabling insofar as it helps them carry out their job effectively. However, we concur with Orlikowski (2002:257) in that we found instances where competence was also "inhibiting," that is, instances when "not-knowing" occurred.

Our main finding is that a key task fundraisers share is that of overcoming and negotiating obstacles not only in the face of specific challenges, but also as an intrinsic part of the work of fundraising. Some fundraisers referred to having to overcome internal perceptions about the lack of importance of fundraising which was often overlooked by other departments. Other examples referred to the need to overcome internal perceptions, especially from senior management, that saw fundraising mostly from a cash generation perspective and neglected the long-term planning and relationship-building involved in fundraising. While fundraisers have a clear vision of how their work should seat within organisational contexts, our data revealed that "sharing identity" was part of a negotiation process whereby fundraisers seek to establish their practice as key and central to the delivery of an organisation's mission and vision. Our data also reveals that most of the learning occurred in the practice of "negotiating and aligning efforts" as a way of dealing with specific fundraising challenges. Cuts to public funding enabled fundraisers to think strategically about the type of skills needed to diversify their income streams. Appointing suitable trustees and artistic directors with a strategic vision supportive of fundraising was one way in which fundraisers, but more generally, organisations as a whole seemed to have learnt how best to support fundraising. Similarly, in higher education a diverse range of skills is required; especially creating opportunities to link and work with a range of people across a given organisation to make things happen.

The data also reveals how fundraisers are especially skilled at attempting to change attitudes towards fundraising within their organisations; either by "building bridges" or "seeking agreement" fundraisers are aware of the importance of fundraising as a key financial resource, and their work involves putting such learning into practice. Ultimately, the ability to implement fundraising-related skills and practices as a shared capability, and to prioritise these as a key part of an organisation's agenda was possible only in those cases when fundraisers had attained a senior status. However, even though fundraisers pursue collective goals, such as striving to overcome external negative perceptions, they are still far from enjoying some of the "desirable features" of professions such as "higher wages", "prestige" Breeze (2017:16), and public legitimacy. This point is made clear in our analysis of fundraising as a professional practice. Even in those cases when fundraisers are clear that they operate as a profession they are, nonetheless, far from being able to change external perceptions about the importance of fundraising.

Our findings thus both concur with and expand on Breeze's (2017:170) argument that fundraising is dissimilar to traditional professions, for example, in medicine, or in law, which have an agreed body of knowledge that contributes to certification. In addition, we argue that fundraising needs to gain legitimacy as an organisational practice. Our data has suggested that this is far from

the case. Instead, fundraisers' ongoing work involves surmounting and negotiating organisational obstacles, especially perceptions about the importance of having a "fundraising culture," rather than implementing change. At present, such accomplishment is more of an ongoing challenge; a "goal rather than a resting place" (Gurin, 1985:88).

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ENDNOTE

[1]Our references are those which include research on fundraising in the UK. However, there is a great deal of research on fundraising in the US where fundraising is a well-established practice; see for example (Aldrich, 2016; Carbone, 1989; Levy, 2009; Shaker & Nathan, 2017; Tempel et al., 2016).

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