

**T H E**

**CASE STUDIES OF  
PROFESSIONALS**

**F O R E**

## Ian Gethin - Private Equity, Mentor and Advisor

For Ian Gethin, the sale of the infrastructure fund he had cofounded for £920m in 2007, caused him to reflect on how he spent his time. Having built his company from 4 employees to 140 following a career in government economics, banking and then private equity, Ian was keen to find a philanthropic interest to target some of his energies but his first observation came as a surprise:

***"Rather than waiting until after I'd sold my business, I wish I had understood years ago how much I could achieve without the need for a major time commitment."***

"Being involved with Football Beyond Borders has made me think differently - its uplifting. In the City, it is hard not to become functional and insular in your mindset because structure and hierarchy play such a strong role. As a youngish professional the opportunities I had to have an impact on strategy and development were limited but being a mentor or a trustee is a chance to step out of the boundaries of any job description.

"Football Beyond Borders are ambitious, pragmatic and resourceful. They have limited means but this forces the organisation to focus on real

outcomes and individual impact which is something every business person should be doing. I have become very respectful of what can be done in the charity sector – this is nothing like the slow, bureaucratic behemoths portrayed in the media.

"It is so motivating what dynamic people can achieve, I feed off them and want to contribute. My role is unofficial and we work on a project by project basis but when you share a common cause with the team, it is easy to build trust. They pick up the phone when they think my skills will add value and we fit it around our mutual schedules."



## Francesca Durante - Investment banking, Mentor, Trustee

Francesca spent fifteen years in M&A in investment banking at Goldman Sachs, ABN Amro and BNP Paribas before completing the Sloan Masters at the London Business School. Francesca is now in her second role as a CFO at financial technology start-up Jaja Finance.

"When I left investment banking I wanted to shift my career focus to working with smaller businesses but I had no networks, no board level experience and was not used to managing stakeholders. Attending business school was a valuable step in addressing these issues but I also needed practical opportunities to exercise the skills I wanted to improve.

"I was introduced to a number of social projects and soon became involved. I knew it was important to select causes that I believed in but what I did not predict was how much it would change me.

***"Mentoring and being a trustee has broadened my perspective and strengthened my persuasive powers. The value of participating in the decision-making process cannot be underestimated."***

"It is quite an experience gaining an understanding of board dynamics. In banking, everyone wants to close the deal and the financial interests exert pressure

for all parties but being on a board is so different. You must take varied opinions into account and understand people's motivations if you want to get things done.

"Everything is much longer-term so being able to frame problems from an alternative point of view, to lobby and to see the broader perspective is crucial.

"I had a very narrow network when I was in investment banking. I didn't expect it but the time I have spent in the charity sector has introduced me to a wide range of people - I have met very senior people, high net-worth individuals and people working in government who I never would have met otherwise. I am achieving three things at the same time - it's giving me a different perspective, its social and it's doing good."



## Alan Morton - Private Equity, Trustee

Alan Morton spent ten years in private equity with Silverfleet Capital and Prudential Asset Management before he started working with largern established charities through Impetus-PEF: “Joining The Fore was the first chance I had had to meet small, dynamic grassroots charities that were addressing practical issues at a local level with true passion. Not only was it was enlightening learning more about these organisations, but it was also very encouraging to come across like-minded business people, no one really talks about these things in the office environment.”

Alan soon joined the Board of a pioneering youth violence-prevention charity: "Street Doctors appealed to me because my parents went to the medical school where the project started, but it was meeting the young founders, all medical students, that truly inspired me. Their belief and passion in what they were doing, ability to see through the challenges and recognition that they needed support to grow meant it was very exciting knowing I could help them develop and succeed. Not only is it rewarding to act at trustee level, but also very satisfying to use my specialist expertise and experience, albeit in a very different environment – for example, I soon found that my experience supporting private-equity backed businesses grow through roll-out or overseas expansion was helping Street Doctors expand from 6 to 18 teams in 4 years in the UK and explore

how it might replicate its model internationally.

***"I took a step away from private equity to be able to scratch the itch I had to become involved in something more socially minded. I wonder if I had realised I could satisfy that part of myself alongside my job, I might have made different decisions."***

"In private equity and boutique finance there is little time or opportunity to appreciate the challenges individuals are facing. In organisations relying on volunteers however, it is impossible not to become acutely aware of this, which in turn means you start to see things from a difference perspective and helps you take a more rounded, reflective view.

"It's great being involved in an organisation from end-to-end as in my professional roles so many things were process driven or focused on a particular aspect. It's honed my ability to listen, reflect, debate and effectively articulate thoughts and opinions, often in new areas, to both support and constructively challenge fellow board members, staff team and volunteers. The problems and challenges experienced at grassroots board level can be surprisingly similar to those in much bigger businesses!"

## Kevin Meehan - Hedge Fund, Banking, Mentor, Trustee

Kevin Meehan has 20 years' experience including as a Hedge Fund COO at Jupiter Asset Management Plc and eight years running a global prime brokerage business at Credit Suisse. Since completing a Master's degree at London Business School he is now active in the start up space as an advisor and as an angel investor with interests in ten businesses ranging from financial technology and education technology to medical.

"I spent many years being a mentor. I liked to focus on making sure that people across the firm but particularly those in mid or back office positions had the right career development opportunities. I enjoyed the interaction because I learnt a lot. It gave me a broader perspective and made me better at my job.

"I was also involved with two or three charities while at Credit Suisse - it helped round out what I was getting out of my job and give me more purpose.

***There is no better way to give you drive and support for your own organisation, than by being given the opportunity to spend time with someone working in a different organisation. It reinforces values for everyone within the business.***

"When I left banking I had to find my own opportunities to give back myself. B360, where I've been involved in African business education and working with SME's, and mentoring for On Purpose have shown me how my skills, which I thought were quite narrow, can fit many other areas. Learning how people can operate without the incredible resources that are available in big businesses is a continual reminder of how much can be done if you prioritise correctly, leverage your networks and, make sure you have meetings that really count and are run effectively. "



## Linsay Trueman - Strategy, Private Equity, Trustee

Linsay Trueman's career has moved from managing the skincare brand Neutrogena at Johnson & Johnson to consulting on marketing strategy at Monitor Company with a trip to Harvard Business School along the way. Her current role as a partner at Lancor where she leads global board-level searches for private equity portfolio companies, combines her interest in people with her knowledge and experience managing businesses.

Introduced to StreetKids International in 2012 by The Fore, Linsay soon became a board member, "I was very naïve when I started as a trustee as there is so much more to it than I first thought. I found myself with a much greater appreciation of others as I was exposed to such a range of people, many of whom had different backgrounds and outlooks to the people I was used to working with. It wasn't just in those different sectors but also people who were much more senior than I was. It gave me confidence.

"On a board you have to use influence and persuasion to get things done. It was fascinating learning how to succeed in situations where a straight forward business case wasn't necessarily just what was required.

"When you are on any board you have to recognise that your decisions can have a huge impact on people's lives and in a small charity this can be quite stark. In big businesses decision-making can feel very distanced from those affected so building a greater appreciation of the weight of responsibility that being on a board holds was a very good experience for me.

***"I am particularly grateful to The Fore as building board experience can be very hard. It often feels like rather a closed pool and few people know where to go if they are interested."***

"It is hugely beneficial to give staff these opportunities so it should be easier to get involved."



## Ann Humphries - Executive Board Member, Mentor

After starting out in strategic planning at BOC International, Ann Humphries built extensive experience of both business theory while teaching at Kingston Business School, and practice. She has been a director of the London Development Agency, the New West End Company and most recently served as Director of Development for the Executive Board of John Lewis Department Stores.

Through The Fore, Ann has mentored three CEOs of small charities, helping them to think strategically and develop the financial viability of their expanding organisations.

"Initially I was surprised by the sheer scale of the charity sector but I quickly realised that charities are just businesses with charitable objectives - the structures are the same. The young charities I've helped feel much like business start-ups but if anything the pressures are greater because it is so difficult to fundraise.

***"Getting involved is a unique, hands-on, learning experience that heightens normal business expertise. It improves emotional intelligence, which is crucial if you want to succeed in management, but which businesses find it very hard to train people in."***

"The value of being able to empathise, motivate and to deal with people who are not like you is hard to understate and I now know there are few better people to learn from than those who lead volunteers and staff in charities

"It is very grounding to work with people who achieve so much with so few resources – I have felt a sense of achievement that it is hard to find at work. I am really proud of helping people."

"In the commercial sector people are often limited to the areas of their specific expertise. Being involved in a whole organisation, however small, allows you to see all areas and how they interconnect. This is certainly the case when working in charities and experiencing this broader perspective is a huge learning curve; a major benefit to both the individual and the employer."

## Tim Wright - Chief of Staff, Trustee

Tim Wright spent 15 years as HR Director of the London Stock Exchange Group and 3 years as the Chief of Staff before leaving to set up his own consultancy. He has been involved in a range of arts charities for over 20 years.

"The pressures people work under in the not-for-profit sector are very different from business. Financial management is very different because of the burdens of fundraising and you have to suspend all beliefs about the right way to do things. It taught me to be much more open-minded and in turn gave me a much stronger, broader view in my professional career in the for-profit sector."

In 2014 he was introduced to The Big House by The Fore, to help write a business plan. Tim soon became a board member and is now the Chair.

"At the Big House we are supporting care leavers. I feel a lot more aware of what is happening in society, and the damage that chaotic lives and mental health inflicts. Realising that not everyone is having a good day and why, makes you a more fully rounded and empathetic person which is crucial for being a good manager.

***"The people working in the charity sector are not as confident as those working in the city. You have to be able to adapt your personal style to gain their trust which is a very valuable skill."***

"Being a trustee is a great way to gain experience of being a non-exec. The role is about questioning and challenging not about telling people what to do and it can take a while to learn the difference. But more than anything, it's just great fun. I've had the opportunity to meet lots of great people, ranging from celebrities to young people. Seeing the progress made by the people you support makes it a fantastic experience."