



**Annual Report**  
2005-2006



Bridges Programmes is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Institute of Contemporary Scotland, the educational and research charity founded in 2000. Since 2002 Bridges has been working with the asylum seeker and refugee community in Glasgow offering work shadowing and work experience placements to aid integration and develop the skills of our clients.

In 2005 the Bridges Programmes achieved its own charitable status and operates from offices in the East End of Glasgow, close to areas of the city where our clients live.

“The Bridges Programmes arose out of a public meeting in Glasgow following the murder of an asylum seeker. Tensions in the city were high as a disadvantaged local community sought to come to terms with the vulnerable newcomers. The Institute of Contemporary Scotland’s

response was essentially simple and practical. The work shadow scheme not only restored a sense of dignity and self worth to the asylum seekers, but brought local people into contact with them in a positive way. By fostering mutual understanding and respect, it has enhanced social as well as economic integration. It is a credit to Scotland.”

*Kenneth Roy, Director and Chairman, Institute of Contemporary Scotland*

“It is a great privilege to be Chairman of Bridges. 2005 was a year of new challenges and opportunities for us, which included gaining our independent charitable status, moving to new offices, fund raising and increasing the staff from 2 to 6. Over 250 people have benefited since Bridges first started its pilot in 2002 and I am proud that Laing O’Rourke were the first private sector company to work with Maggie and her team and to have witnessed over the years, at first hand, the benefits the project brings to clients, the Scottish business community and the community in general. I would like to take the opportunity of thanking all the staff, trustees, partners and supporters for their time effort, commitment and passion in the past year.”

*Jim Gaffney, Chairman Board of Trustees, the Bridges Programmes; head of Social Corporate Responsibility, Laing O’Rourke & New City Vision*

#### **Trustees:**

Jim Gaffney, Laing O’Rourke (Chairman)

Maggie Lennon, Director, Bridges Programmes

Maureen Clarke, South Lanarkshire Council

Linda McTavish, Principal Anniesland College

Prof. Alan McGregor, Glasgow University

# The Team

The Bridges Programmes has six full time members of staff including admin support, case workers and a youth officer. All of the staff, with the exception of the administrator, have a caseload of clients whom they support in a variety of ways. The same principles of Equal Opportunities, personal development and diversity that inform the work we do with clients, is reflected in our staff and our recruitment and employment policies.

Since July 2005 staff have undergone nearly 400 hours of training in a wide range of areas including counselling, facilitation, IT, administration and specialist training in working with asylum seekers, refugees and unaccompanied minors. In addition, two staff are undergoing supported NVQs in Business Administration and Management. Two of our staff have counselling qualifications, one has a degree in quality management and between them they speak eight languages in addition to English.

As well as demonstrating a commitment to clients through their work, half of the staff are, or are training to be, mentors with various asylum and refugee projects in the city.

At Bridges we value our staff, and realise that working with refugee and asylum seekers every day, trying to relieve

distress, improve well being and facilitate integration through the workplace, can be tough on them, and we support them by offering a free and confidential counselling service which they can take advantage of if they need support in either work related or personal matters. We invite work life balance advisors from the local Alternative Stress Centre to advise the staff on stress management and relaxation techniques. Once a month this busy team make time for a teambuilding lunch which everyone takes turns in preparing and which can get quite competitive!!

As part of our policy to stretch staff and expose them to as many experiences as possible all staff are offered an opportunity to go on international staff exchanges with colleagues doing similar jobs through our EQUAL transnational partnership, in either Finland, Italy, Austria, Poland or Lithuania. We regularly host visiting colleagues from overseas to share best practice with the staff.

In addition to paid staff we have a team of volunteer mentors who work directly on our youth project.

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# Introducing Bridges Programmes Ltd

Bridges Programmes Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of the education and research charity the Institute of Contemporary Scotland, founded in 2000.

In 2001, a young Iraqi – a member of the Kurdish community – was murdered in the Sighthill district of Glasgow. This area of extreme social deprivation was chosen for the dispersal of thousands of asylum seekers. The tensions between the disadvantaged local community and the vulnerable newcomers escalated so seriously that the city, following the murder, was on the brink of social unrest. It was clear that the situation had deteriorated because of unsympathetic media coverage and a failure to integrate the two groups.

In response to the murder, the Institute of Contemporary Scotland, organised a public meeting in Glasgow. There was a genuine desire on the part of those present to improve the atmosphere in the city; and the question was raised: what could the Institute, a non-political organisation do to help?

The answer was the Bridges Programmes, piloted in the autumn of 2002 in the National Health Service and the construction industry. Within 6 months we had raised enough money to employ one full-time member of staff and had more than 100 clients registered with us.

We now have six staff, an income of over £200,000 a year, several hundred clients, and more than 70 organisations and companies supporting us.

Bridges Programmes is recognised as an innovative and influential organisation, dedicated to partnership working and to the full integration of asylum seekers and refugees in the city, and an example of best practice in Europe.

Our core activity is to provide work shadowing and work experience opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees. By promoting mentoring and integration in the workplace, we hope to enhance the existing skills of our clients; improve their English, confidence and motivation; showcase the skills profile of these new citizens to employers; break down barriers and address prejudice. We also have a youth mentoring and support project which offers a range of services to unaccompanied minors in the city; asylum seekers and refugees without an accompanying adult, under the age of 18.

We are involved in two transnational projects in Europe. One on the empowerment of asylum seekers, and one developing an accredited qualification for people working with asylum seekers and refugees across all 25 member states.

The organisation has charitable status and is managed by a board of Trustees. We have six staff and we reflect our commitment to Equal Opportunities and personal development which is embedded in the work we do, through a diverse and skilled workforce.

We have featured in two, BBC commissioned, hour long documentaries and a third is in production, to be screened later in 2006.

“This is an exemplary project of its kind. Engagement with employers has challenged stereotypes and encouraged thinking around modifications needed to make the workplace appropriate to refugees and BME communities generally.”

*Michael Bell Associates*

# Work shadowing and Bridges Programmes

Work shadowing is loosely affiliated with volunteering, combining relevant hands-on experience, with an environment conducive to observing and gaining skills which are sector specific, and relate to the world of work. In an asylum seeker and refugee context it is an excellent way to build bridges between different communities and reduce prejudice, fear and hostility on both sides. Work shadowing is a positive partnership between the community and the employer. In the context of asylum seekers and refugees, it provides an opportunity to experience an environment, from which they might have been excluded for many months or even years; it offers clients an insight into the culture of this country; and it encourages assimilation and integration. Work shadowing provides an opportunity to gain a broader understanding of employers' expectations, and is a useful aid in preparing asylum seekers and refugees for the return to work in the future.

Offering work shadow placements raises the profile and promotes a positive image of a host employer. Work shadowing demonstrates a company or organisation's commitment to equal opportunities; its contribution to the local community; partnership working and social justice. It also provides employers with a chance to develop employees at all levels to act as coaches and mentors. We suggest that a placement lasts one day a week for 12 weeks although that is negotiable.

Following a Home Office ruling in 2002, asylum seekers are no longer eligible to apply for work permits or to undertake any form of paid employment. In the case of asylum seekers, the primary aim of a placement is to keep people engaged with their professional field, to maintain their skills base and improve their understanding of their professional experience within a Scottish context. For refugees, and those with leave to remain and work in the UK, this experience element is just as valuable, though a placement becomes more important in assisting them to gain their first step towards employment.

## How does the scheme work?

Companies are invited to register with our programme, to offer placements in relevant areas, and within which they feel they could adequately support a client. Clients with the relevant experience are then matched with the host company through a joint selection process with their Human Resource departments and with the Bridges Programmes. When a relevant match is found, a 3-way meeting is arranged between the host company, the Bridges client and their case worker in order for both parties to gain a wider understanding of each other, and discover whether or not their aims and objectives for the shadowing placement can be accommodated. When both parties are satisfied, a work plan for the placement is

developed, comprising both company requirements and client learning needs.

During the 12 week placement, the Bridges Programmes will maintain regular contact with both the host company and client, including mid way and end of placement visits. The Bridges Programmes monitors the distance travelled by clients to measure the effectiveness of our scheme both in terms of empowering and increasing the skills base of participants, and the benefits to the host companies who devote their time and resources to making this scheme the success that it is.

“The Scottish Court Service is committed to diversity and this has been, and will hopefully continue to be, a perfect opportunity to put that commitment into practice.”

# New Developments at Bridges Programmes

## Our clients come from

Afghanistan	Iran	Russia
Albania	Iraq	Rwanda
Algeria	Israel	Sierra Leone
Angola	Ivory Coast	Somalia
Azerbaijan	Kenya	Sri Lanka
Belarus	Kosovo	Sudan
Burundi	Kuwait	Syria
Cameroon	Lebanon	Togo
China	Libya	Turkey
Congo	Moldova	Turkmenistan
D R Congo	Montenegro	Uganda
Ethiopia	Nigeria	Ukraine
Guinea	Pakistan	Zimbabwe
India	Palestine	

34% come from central Africa

65% are men

35% are women

11% aged under 18

14% aged between 19-30

42% aged between 31-40

27% aged between 41-50

6% aged over 50

55% are asylum seekers

45% have leave to remain

We are constantly trying to improve the quality of our service to clients and the range of services that we provide, either through working with others or through developing initiatives ourselves. Our main focus in the next twelve months will include; creating extra support for two specific sectors, Engineers and finance managers; improving the monitoring and content of our placements; offering refugee clients more support in practical job search techniques; providing pre-work placement support for female clients facing particular barriers; introducing new activities for our unaccompanied minors and engaging more directly with employers.

In the next twelve months we will be piloting two new projects which we hope will enhance the work placements which we offer.

The first will be placements with an added vocational ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) element. This is in recognition of the practical and beneficial English which is learnt on placement and reflects a growing awareness that vocational English, delivered in the workplace, is a real bonus to making someone job ready and improving their integration.

The second will be to develop a formal accreditation for activities carried out as part of a work placement. This will

be in the form of profile building and will provide both the client and future employers with a greater understanding and evidence of skills gained while with a company.

In recent months we have been monitoring “distance travelled” by clients on work placements, and in particular measuring improvements in their motivation, confidence and English acquisition. This information in the future will help us plan further support for clients ensuring that future placements are relevant to their situation and help us create personal development plans for our clients.

The Youth project is about to embark on an exciting new musical project with Glasgow City Halls for the unaccompanied minors we have registered with us, and we will be developing a series of work based activities for this group in the next twelve months.

In September 2006 we are launching a series of empowerment workshops for women asylum seekers who are perhaps not quite ready to take up work shadowing and volunteering. This might be due to childcare issues, poor English or general lack of confidence and motivation. This series of six workshops will demonstrate how the experience and inherent skills and abilities of these women can be transformed to aid their wider integration and participation in society.

We will be launching a new re-training and re-skilling programme for Refugee Engineers which will be industry based and will provide employers with the evidence of the skills, qualifications and experiences of this highly skilled group, allowing them to access employment at the appropriate level.

We will be supporting our large number of accountants and finance managers with the creation of a self study group to help them access further and higher education appropriate to their needs.

We will be hosting seminars, jointly with the Fresh Talent Initiative of the Scottish Executive, to promote the employment of refugees and migrant workers in key sectors. And we will be producing a work placement training DVD and best practice guide for use by companies, organisations and practitioners.



# Blowing our own trumpet

We work hard at Bridges and we are delighted when our passion and commitment for the work we do is successful and when we see clients and companies really benefiting from the programme.

Since we began we have placed over 250 clients with over 70 companies and organisations.

Teacher placements in schools have always been some of the most successful partnerships. In the last year over 17 schools in Glasgow and beyond, have placed teachers, and for refugees with leave to remain, this valuable experience is a real boost to helping them register with the General Teaching Council of Scotland and finding work. In June 2006 Bridges co-hosted a conference for senior management staff and principal teachers in Glasgow schools to try and increase the number of placement opportunities. In September we will be joining with the Scottish Executive's Fresh Talent team to promote migrant workers and refugees as teachers and support staff in schools throughout Scotland.

In May 2006 the first sector specific conference to promote the employment of migrant workers and refugees was held jointly with the Scottish Executive for the construction industry. Over 28 companies were represented.

In June 2006 two of our younger clients, Liliane from Burundi and Sabina from Cameroon represented the Bridges Programmes at the national Young Organisation of the Year Competition, organised by the national charity the Young Programme. They presented a moving paper on the changing experience of African women and were the only Scottish team to make it to the competition.

We are fortunate in our work to witness the real difference that we can make to people's lives and the positive outcomes keep us determined to keep making that difference.

## Mohammed

Mohammed joined the Bridges Programmes in late 2003. When asked why he thought a shadow placement would be useful, he humbly acknowledged that his 'long experience might be beneficial' to an employer. Indeed there was 'still plenty of room for improvement' in terms of his own professional development. In fact, Mohammed had worked as a radio and television journalist for twenty years with an additional ten years service in the Iraqi diplomatic core. Bridges' welcomes clients from diverse educational and occupational backgrounds and it is not unusual to place people with such outstanding experience.

Mohammed has been shadowing a senior BBC Scotland features producer. The placement involved following the recording and editing schedules of a BBC World Service programme about Babylon. Mohammed was able to assist with translations and voiceovers. He is an extraordinary individual who contributes to awareness of asylum issues through voluntary work with the Scottish Refugee Council's Press Office. He is also the first asylum seeker ever to be granted membership of the National Union of Journalists. Bridges' next challenge is to find him a placement shadowing a senior news reporter!

## Fatmira

In 2005 Bridges celebrated its first successful round of placements in secondary schools. We placed seven asylum seeker and refugee teachers in the Science, Languages, Mathematics and Home Economics Departments of schools in Springburn and Pollok. One of our clients was Fatmira, an Albanian refugee. In November she shadowed the Principal Teacher of the Science Department at St Paul's. She planned and delivered lessons for the S4 Physics Electronics class, learned how to use the nationally produced syllabi to guide her teaching and assessment and was given an excellent reference. Fatmira's teaching practice proved a valuable asset. She achieved top grade in a recent



recruitment interview with Glasgow City Council. We wish her every success for a future job at the beginning of the next school year.

## Evelyn

Evelyn was referred to Bridges by the Glasgow Asylum Support Service. She is originally from Zimbabwe and is living in Glasgow with her youngest child. Evelyn worked as a senior hair stylist in Harare but had always loved to cook. To make use of her time while awaiting a decision on her asylum claim Evelyn joined John Wheatley College and studied for an HNC in Professional Cookery. She received the Robert Bennie Award for Endeavour and Achievement in Learning while her flair and imagination in cooking with fish also enabled her to scoop a Merit Award at the 25th Scot Hot Internationale Salon Culinaire d'Ecosse. Now with Bridges, Evelyn is shadowing a professional chef at Food for Thought. She contributes to the development of training people from disadvantaged backgrounds to cook multi-ethnic and healthy traditional fare.

“ I am in college now but I joined Bridges so that I could put what I learned into practice. Generally I am more confident and I can talk to any people at any level now with confidence.”

*Somalian Refugee on placement with Scottish Business in the Community*

“ Taking a placement reinforces humility in people. We have taken her into our hearts, even the service users. We wouldn't hesitate to take her on board if we had a post.”

*Anne Clark, Meldrum House day care centre, South Lanarkshire Council*

“ I feel I am 10 years younger. All the time you are going to college it doesn't work if you study to use something you learn but you don't use it. Every minute is so valuable.”

*An Iranian teacher on placement at Shawlands Primary School*

“ We have now facilitated two of Bridges clients on a work shadowing basis. Both had good language and technical skills and were pleasant additions to our workplace. We would definitely participate in the programme again as we feel that not only were we able to provide valuable work experience to the participants but that our own staff also benefited from the experience.”

*Phyllis Cockburn, Director, Consol Scotland, Scottish Small Business of the Year 2006*

“ The Bridges Programmes has been a ray sunlight to my professional life and a solution to my integration into the Scottish work culture and society. Many thanks, to everyone, for your day-to-day support.”

*Burundian refugee re-training as a solicitor in Scotland*

## Youth Project

### The Youth Project has 24 clients at present:

12 from Somalia

4 from the Democratic Republic of Congo

3 from Iraq

1 from Kurdish-Iraq

2 from Iran

1 from Guinea

1 from Syria.

75% male

25% female

The Youth Project was created in October 2005 with funding from BBC Children in Need, and its main aim is to support Unaccompanied Minors from the Asylum Seeker and Refugee community living in Glasgow.

Unaccompanied minors are young people under the age of 18 who are in the city without any accompanying responsible adult and some are themselves responsible for younger siblings. Some of these young people have attended school in the city, others have not, some are at College, others are unemployed.

The programme provides a range of services and activities including a mentoring service in partnership with Childline Scotland. This valuable project helps the young people realise their full potential as students, citizens and employees while maintaining valuable links with people from the city. The other main intervention will be a series of work-based initiatives, for the young people who are over 16, to help them access the job market more effectively. In addition, through registration, we are able to refer clients onto other specialist agencies who can support them in terms of housing, health, benefits and legal advice. All of this helps us to understand their existing skills, future goals and aspirations.

24 young people have signed up with the Youth Project since its inception and the largest proportion are from Central Africa.

Our mentors are recruited from a wide variety of sources and undergo an extensive interview and training programme delivered by Childline Scotland. All mentors are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure Scotland check. Mentors are recruited and trained throughout the year.

In this project, as in other aspects of Bridges work, we work in close partnership with other agencies and we are grateful for the support and assistance we receive from Childline Scotland, Careers Scotland, Anniesland College, and the Campus Project.

In an effort to share best practice and disseminate information we participate in two Practitioners Forums in the city. One which looks at legal and policy-related issues with regards to our client group. The other which is concerned with the practical support and initiatives for the young people in the city. As the project heads towards its second year a series of exciting new initiatives is being planned:

From this summer the Youth Project will be offering its young clients an opportunity to participate in an exciting

music learning experience in partnership with Glasgow City Halls; Glasgow's newest music venue. The Musical Bridges Programme will comprise of a variety of musical activities including songwriting and creative music making. Delivered by professional musicians, it will involve the use of the latest musical technology which will allow clients to produce recordings of their original work. The project will run for thirty weeks from September 2006.

Summer activities for mentors and mentees including a trip on board of the Waverley Paddle Steamer and archery at Mugdock Country Park.

As part of Oxfam's Positive Images Project, which challenges the negative portrayals that asylum seekers receive in the media at large, some of our clients will be reporting directly to the project on their experiences with the media. And some of our clients are to be featured in a BBC Scotland commissioned documentary on Unaccompanied Minors, to be screened later in 2006.



# Partnership working

At Bridges we recognise that the problems and barriers facing asylum seekers and refugees are too complex for just one organisation to tackle on their own and so we believe in working with others for the benefit of the client group. Through our commitment to partnership working we have made some very strong alliances that have helped develop and deliver a range of services; have helped us shape policy proposals and increased our ability to advocate effectively on behalf of our clients.

One of the most important groups that we are involved in is the ATLAS Development Partnership, a Scotland wide partnership set up to support organisations who are actively responding to the dispersal of asylum seekers in Scotland. The partnership is in receipt of funding from EQUAL, a European Union Community initiative until the end of 2007.

In 2004 Bridges and a number of other agencies formed New Roots Scotland (NRS), a strategic alliance of organisations and service deliverers set up to promote the successful economic and social integration of refugees and asylum seekers. In 2005 Maggie Lennon, director of the Bridges Programmes was asked to represent both Bridges and New Roots Scotland on the newly convened Scottish Refugee Integration Forum (SRIF) by the Scottish Executive and invited to submit a series of action points

and recommendations to SRIF around Education, Training and Employment issues. The report was submitted in May 2006. In 2006 Bridges and NRS representation was extended to the Scottish Executive's Ethnic Minority Labour Market Group.

Since 2003, Bridges has been working actively with the Refugee and asylum seeker teachers project and the Refugee doctors project providing work placements for their participants and Bridges is represented on their respective steering groups. In 2004 Bridges with a number of other agencies formed the OTAR project a re-training and re-skilling route for refugee trades people. English Language support for this is provided by Anniesland College, technical support and training by Stow College and Queenslie Training Centre and we arrange the work placements for this initiative through the private sector, primarily through Laing O'Rourke Scotland.

## We work in partnership with:

Anniesland College  
Stow College  
Queenslie Training Centre  
Childline Scotland  
Glasgow North Ltd  
The Initiative

Scottish Enterprise Glasgow  
Scottish Refugee Council  
Job Centre Plus  
Careers Scotland  
Fresh Talent Initiative - Scottish Executive  
Universities Scotland  
Open University  
Glasgow Caledonian University  
University of Strathclyde  
STUC  
Scottish Court Service  
Glasgow City Council  
SQA  
SCQF  
The Wise Group  
Business Gateway Refugees into Enterprise

## We are represented on:

ATLAS Development Partnership steering group  
Scottish Refugee Integration Forum  
Ethnic Minorities Labour Market Group  
RITeS (Refugees into teaching in Scotland)  
West of Scotland Health Professionals Forum  
OTAR (Overseas trade assessment and re-skilling)  
ASAP a six country transnational partnership

“ I look forward to Friday’s, I know we’ll be doing something different. Alistair tells them I am his colleague, I am a trained chef, the way they appreciate me as well, that makes me feel good. I think it’s been a highlight.”

*Zimbabwean asylum seeker  
on placement with Food for Thought*

“ There was no point us saying to other companies you have to get involved in community, you have to improve corporate social responsibility, you have to be more aware and then we turn round and say, ‘well we’re not doing it.’ So it seemed quite logical that we should do it since we were asking other companies to get involved.”

*Brian Duffy  
Scottish Business in the Community*



# Statement of financial activities for the period ended 31 December 2005

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Period ended 31/12/05 Total £
<b>Incoming resources</b>			
Grants	91,101	78,110	169,211
Income from investments	132	-	132
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<u>91,233</u>	<u>78,110</u>	<u>169,343</u>
<b>Charitable expenditure</b>			
Cost of activities in furtherance of the charity's objects	(31,326)	(27,573)	(58,899)
Support costs	(15,856)	-	(15,856)
Management and administration	(31,408)	(250)	(31,658)
<b>Total charitable expenditure</b>	<u>(78,590)</u>	<u>(27,823)</u>	<u>(106,413)</u>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<u>12,643</u>	<u>50,287</u>	<u>62,930</u>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<u>12,643</u>	<u>50,287</u>	<u>62,930</u>

# Balance sheet as at 31 December 2005

	31/12/05	
	£	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Tangible assets		4,886
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors	38,867	
Cash at bank and in hand	33,198	
	<u>72,065</u>	
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	<u>(14,019)</u>	
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>58,046</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>62,932</u>
<b>Capital and funds</b>		
Called up share capital		2
Unrestricted funds		12,643
Restricted funds		<u>50,287</u>
		<u>62,932</u>

This is a summary of the full audited accounts which are available on request

Bridges Programmes gratefully acknowledges financial support from the following:



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