



  
**ANNUAL  
REVIEW  
2010-2011**





Message from the **di**rector

## **A**utumn 2011 marks the start of ten years of Bridges support for asylum seekers and refugees.

In that time we have added numerous services to our core programme of work placements, including a youth programme, employability courses, vocational English support, literacy and numeracy support, women's empowerment support, mentoring and an Open University project. Some of these projects have now finished, but the core work of Bridges, our placements, empowerment and employability support continues.

We have worked with dozens of employers and partner organisations who have supported us in numerous ways, hosting clients and delivering services with us. Our reach goes beyond Scotland working with, and supporting, organisations in other parts of the United Kingdom and in Europe. Since 2005 Bridges has worked transnationally with partners from fourteen other member states or regions of the European Union. And we have hosted visitors from New Zealand, Australia, Norway and the Reunion Islands and most recently we have had an interest in our work from the New York State Department of Labour.

But one thing has remained constant in that time: the ongoing need of our client base for a specialist service to address their social and economic integration, and an organisation that focuses on what our clients can do and what they know rather than what they don't. An organisation that gets results.

We face challenging times: funding is more difficult to secure; the economic downturn has made it harder for clients to get jobs; migrants whether forced or voluntary are facing greater prejudices and organisations and governments that support them are subject to open hostility, sometimes with tragic consequences.

The shocking events in Norway in July 2011 left most people asking, Why? And that is the theme of this year's annual review. It is the question we get asked most often; from the people we support, from partners, from the general public and from the media. This report is our answer to all of these questions.

**Maggie Lennon**  
Director, Bridges Programmes  
September 2011





The **bridges**' team

**Why do we do it?**

**T**he simple answer is because we fill a need that is missing in other approaches to employability for the client group.

Our vision is of a prosperous Scotland; a country where the potential of every inhabitant is encouraged, where the skills of each resident are valued, and where we are all given the opportunity to enrich the economy with a feeling of pride.

Sadly for many of our clients this is not possible. They may struggle with language, racism, references, confidence, the right to work, or getting their qualifications recognised. That's where we come in using our unique expertise in guiding overseas minorities back into employment. Our team of dedicated caseworkers help clients to understand the Scottish workplace, and give them the support they need to find employment suitable to their skills and potential.

The second answer is because we are good at what we do.

In the last 12 months over 90 work placements have been set up for adults, 28 women completed our empowerment programme and have been matched with volunteer

mentors, 30 young people under 25 took part in Life Skills courses at Anniesland College or the Vibrant Glasgow programme with Rangers and Celtic Football clubs, over 100 clients have taken place in our vocational ESOL programmes before taking up placements; 15 clients accessed courses through our Open University Programme, 45 clients went through our various employment programmes and dozens of clients benefitted from one to one application and interview support. 29% of our eligible clients entered the labour market.

Bridges owes its success to its dedicated staff and trustees. In the last 12 months Bridges staff were: Maggie Lennon, Director; Suki Mills, Assistant Director; Liz Porter, Employer Engagement lead; Jonathan Sharp, Regine Bews and Elena Silich, adult caseworkers; Tiff Griffin and Rose Mbabazi, youth team; Fiona Colbron-Brown, Office Manager and Tony Smith and Hira Chaudry Admin Assistants; and our two secondees were Campbell Wilson, Open University and Colin Woodward, Contract Scotland.

Our board of Trustees consists of Jim Gaffney, Chairman; Liz Maguire; Linda McTavish; Peter Syme; Sara Thiam; Kevin McKenna and Pauline McKay.





The client

**Why is this happening to me?**

**W**hy do people shout rude things at me in the street? Why will no-one give me credit for my experience and qualifications from home? Why did I have to leave my home, my family and my life behind? Why don't people believe me? Why won't they let me work?

These are just some of the questions we hear from clients on a daily basis. Sadly we have to realise that asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in Scotland are just as likely to be victims of racial abuse and discrimination as anywhere; very often because of the myths and false information which surrounds the issue, often made worse by the media.

We estimate that the majority of people in Scotland are unaware, for example, that asylum seekers are not permitted to work. We are fortunate in Scotland that the Scottish Government believes in integration from day one, and so in Scotland asylum seekers have equal rights to health care and education including English language classes but the right to work and asylum policy in general is a matter for the Westminster Government.

At the moment it is difficult for employers to fully appreciate the overseas qualifications and work experience of our clients, which

often means highly skilled people are forced to take up positions well below their earning capacity and capabilities. This is the issue that can cause resentment amongst local communities. It is in no-one's interest having a doctor from Zimbabwe stacking shelves in a supermarket.

We value free speech in this country, the freedom to hold political opinions, to vote freely, to hold any religious beliefs or none, to expect to be treated equally no matter our gender or sexual orientation, to speak whatever language is our mother tongue without discrimination. Why wouldn't we accord those freedoms to others? And where they cannot enjoy these freedoms and rights in their own country, why wouldn't we offer them here.

We all want a better life, don't we? Why wouldn't we offer that chance to others?



The employer

**Why should we get involved?**



**B**ridges simply couldn't exist without its partner employer. We rely on them to offer placements, information interviews, provide advice and guidance on CVs and applications, host site visits, run mock interview sessions and in many cases offer employment.

employment.

When we meet new employers who we hope to work with, often the first question is why should we get involved? The best answers are those from other employers and the reasons for employers working with us are as varied as the employers themselves.

Some have a long tradition of corporate social responsibility, of giving something back.

Some believe supporting a charity, which works locally is a strong sign to their staff that they are committed to the local area.

Some understand that the sustainability of their company will depend in the future on having a more diverse and flexible workforce. Some wish their staff to reflect the diversity of their customer base.

Some have an inbuilt commitment to training and supporting potential staff, especially young people.

Some have statutory duties under the single Equality Act, to reflect the diversity of the population.

Some wish to impress their shareholders that they are an Equal opportunities employer. Some wish to develop the mentoring and coaching skills of their staff.

But the one thing they all have in common is that they share our fundamental belief that it is good business sense and good for society to give people a chance. And they also understand that the Bridges' philosophy of not just preparing the clients for the workplace, but preparing the workplace for the client is the real way to make a difference to people's employment opportunities.

Employers and stakeholders can rely on lots of support from our caseworkers, at every stage of the process, including awareness raising training, mentoring support, advice and guidance, support in setting up a placement and in deciding what is the best type of support they can provide.

Many of our employers have used their support of Bridges to gain recognised quality initiatives such as Investors in People or the Charter Mark and others have had their work recognised by winning Diversity Awards.



The volunteers and partners  
**Why do they need us?**

**F**or a small organisation Bridges achieves a great deal and that is because we don't work alone. We realise that clients' needs are complex and that they will need the support of more than one agency. This is why Bridges invests so much time in building up our partnerships and developing our volunteers.

In addition to our employers, Bridges enjoys strong relationships with a number of organisations who assist us with service delivery. In the last 12 months we have delivered programmes in partnership with the Scottish Court Service, Anniesland College, City of Glasgow College, Rangers and Celtic Football clubs, the Open University, Careers Scotland, The Red Cross, Y People, GRAMNET (Glasgow Refugee Asylum and Migrant Network) at the University of Glasgow and the Employability Forum in London.

Bridges also acts as a signposting agency to statutory and local support from the many agencies including Job Centre Plus, Glasgow Regeneration Agency, housing providers, legal representatives, Positive Action in Housing, Citizens Advice Bureaus, Integration Networks, financial advisors, mental health services, English classes and further education. And in return many of these agencies refer people to us.

Bridges also enjoys the support of our volunteers. Most of our volunteers participate in our youth and women's mentoring programme, after a period of training. One of the most rewarding elements of our volunteer mentor programme is that many former mentees, having benefitted from having a mentor, are coming back to retrain to give something back themselves.

Sometimes we host volunteers in the office and we regularly take in interns from students doing a degree in Community Development who usually take part in our courses as voluntary tutors. In 2011 we have hosted two post graduate interns, one from Germany and one from Denmark carrying out valuable research on various aspects of our women's support programme.

In all of our partnership relationships, including our employers, it is important that the partner feels they get something back from being involved with Bridges, and that support is not just in one direction. That is why employers, partners and volunteers continue to work with us, for the benefit of all of our clients.





The media and the public  
**Why are they here?**

**A**s a signatory of the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees which was 60 this year, **forced migrants** who are escaping torture, war or persecution have a right to seek refuge in the United Kingdom or any of the signatory countries.

80% of the worlds 10,500,000 current refugees are supported in the developing world. Pakistan, Iran and Syria are the countries who take the most refugees.

In 2010 845,000 new claims for asylum were lodged with governments across the world with Britain and Belgium having the lowest number of applications in Europe at 2.4% each\*. Approximately 40% of those applying to remain in the UK are granted leave to remain, under various programmes.

Claiming asylum is a human right. We only have to look at the news to see how many countries are embroiled in civil wars or wars of occupation, are failed states, or are committing genocide and where human rights abuses go unchecked.

Over 70% of our clients are educated to, or beyond, college level, and over 85% worked in their home countries and so have

experience and skills which can be useful here. Many have supplemented overseas qualifications by taking qualifications here.

Most **voluntary migrants** who have English as a second language are from member states of the European Union and have the right to travel and work in any European country, as do we. Some come for a relatively short space of time, others decide to settle with their families.

All of Europe is suffering from an ageing and declining population, Scotland more so than most. Scotland needs people to re-locate here, people with skills and experience. Families that will settle and help maintain population levels in the future and keep local schools open. People who will work and pay taxes. People who will add to the diversity of this small country.

We are fortunate in Scotland that Scottish Government policy and services, like Bridges, exist to aid and support integration. When integration measures work well, then migration becomes a positive development.

\*Figures from UNHCR

THE BRIDGES PROGRAMMES (REGISTERED NUMBER : SC352017)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010

		Unrestricted Funds 2010	Restricted Funds 2010	Total Funds 2010	Total Funds 2009
	<u>Notes</u>	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>					
<b>Incoming Resources from generated funds:-</b>					
Investment Income	2	-	-	-	2
<b>Incoming Resources from charitable activities:-</b>					
Grants	3	19,426	362,834	382,260	301,581
Donations		-	1,069	1,069	510
Other		892	-	892	3,028
<b>TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES</b>		<u>20,318</u>	<u>363,903</u>	<u>384,221</u>	<u>305,121</u>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>					
Charitable Activities	4	54,751	287,441	342,192	290,213
Governance Costs	5	973	5,109	6,082	7,573
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>		<u>55,724</u>	<u>292,550</u>	<u>348,274</u>	<u>297,786</u>
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) FOR THE YEAR</b>		(35,406)	71,353	35,947	7,335
Fund Balances as at 1 January 2010		<u>66,709</u>	<u>13,459</u>	<u>80,168</u>	<u>72,833</u>
Fund Balances at 31 December 2010		<u>31,303</u>	<u>84,812</u>	<u>116,115</u>	<u>80,168</u>

The results for the year derive from continuing activities and there are no gains or losses other than those shown above.



THE BRIDGES PROGRAMMES (REGISTERED NUMBER : SC352017)

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2010

	<u>Notes</u>	2010		2009	
		£	£	£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>					
Tangible assets	8		-		2,543
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Cash and bank balances		135,874		59,247	
Debtors and prepayments	9	<u>42,932</u>		<u>66,542</u>	
		178,806		125,789	
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	10	<u>(62,691)</u>		<u>(48,164)</u>	
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>			116,115		77,625
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>			116,115		80,168
<b>CAPITAL AND FUNDS</b>					
Unrestricted funds	13/15	31,303		66,709	
Restricted funds	14	<u>84,812</u>		<u>13,459</u>	
			<u>116,115</u>		<u>80,168</u>

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the special provisions of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008).

The financial statements were approved by the Board and signed on its behalf on 3 May 2011 by:-

**James Gaffney**  
Trustee

**Elizabeth Maguire**  
Trustee



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