



# Examples of Best Practice

# What is The Bridges Project?

- The Bridges Project is a work shadow scheme open to both refugees and asylum seekers.
- Refugees and asylum seekers are matched with a Scot of the same profession.
- The refugee or asylum seeker works alongside their host, one day each week for a period of twelve weeks. During this time the refugee will help the host with their normal daily tasks.
- The scheme has been running for almost two years, during which time we have placed more than 70 individuals.

# Which occupations have been placed?

Some of the skills which have been placed so far:

Plumbers

IT Technicians

Architects

Electricians

Managers

Accountants

Doctors

Teachers

Social Workers

Engineers

Administrators

Academics

Pharmacists

Vets

Lawyers

Graphic Designers

# What are the benefits for the employer?

Work Shadowing demonstrates a company's commitment to:

- ◆ Equal Opportunities
- ◆ Social Justice
- ◆ Partnership Working

Work Shadowing also helps a company to develop employees as coaches or mentors

# What are the benefits for the refugee?

Work shadowing gives an asylum seeker or refugee:

1. Their first glimpse of the Scottish workplace.
2. An opportunity to see first-hand how his or her job operates in Scotland.
3. The chance to meet like-minded professionals.
4. An opportunity to get references.

# What works?

- A good vocational match between a skilled individual and a welcoming company.
- The more detailed the plan of activity for the shadower, the richer the placement.
- When The Bridges Project can work in partnership with other agencies capable of giving specialist advice e.g. Refugee Doctors Programme.
- When one person in an organisation is given specific responsibility for the welfare of refugees or asylum seekers.

# What doesn't work?

- When a refugee or asylum seeker has so many immigration or welfare problems they cannot concentrate or attend their placement.
- When a refugee or asylum seeker has been given bad advice, leading to unrealistic expectations of the Scottish working environment.
- When there is no route for the asylum seeker or refugee to return to their former profession, leading to long-term frustration.

# Case Studies

(all names have been changed)

Abdel is an asylum seeking Civil Engineer from Iran. He took up his work shadow placement with a large construction firm soon after arriving in the UK almost two years ago. It soon became clear that his skill level was far higher than most Scottish engineers and the company let us know they wanted to offer Abdel a job. The company were able to apply for a work permit on his behalf. Last week his work permit application was granted and he will now be working with the construction firm on a full-time basis.

Arnold is an asylum seeking accountant from Zimbabwe. He was given a work shadow placement with a large financial services department. After missing the first two days of his placement, Arnold let us know that his wife and new baby were having health problems due the stress of living in temporary hotel accommodation over a nine month period, and that he believed he could be transported to Dungavel in the near future. He cancelled his placement and disappeared from contact.

# More Case Studies

Thomas is an electrician from Pakistan who has been having trouble getting his skills assessed. He was given a placement within the building department of a large University. Over a three month period Thomas' confidence and commitment soared. He is now going to be one of the first electricians tested under a new pilot scheme to accredit and upskill refugee tradespeople.

Aisha is an asylum seeking teacher from Egypt. During her placement in a local primary school, she was given responsibility for coaching a small group of pupils who were behind in their class work. Over a three month period she was able to turn around both their test results and their confidence. When she had an accident recently, four members of the school staff surprised her with a home visit.

# What next?

In the future we hope to:

- Work in partnership with other agencies to create a number of fast-track retraining routes.
- Continue and expand our work shadow placements
- Help with the development of a thorough system of career advice throughout the city



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