



**Bridges to
Development**

2019

Annual Report

**Campus Biotech Innovation Park
Avenue de Sécheron, 15
1202 Geneva
Switzerland**

**835 NW 56th St
Seattle WA 98107
USA**

Introduction

This report presents a summary of the activities and achievements of **Bridges to Development** (Bridges) Switzerland and US over the first full year of operations. After focusing its inaugural months in 2018 on establishing scalable organizational processes, Bridges opened its doors in January 2019. The following sections capture highlights from the year, summaries of Bridges' work, organizational developments, lessons, financials, and directions for 2020.

01 Highlights from 2019

Advancing our purpose: The portfolio of Bridges grew in 2019, with a new collaboration or project beginning approximately every month. The most common focus was on innovative health interventions, or partnerships to prevent neglected tropical diseases (NTDs).

Bridges staff recognized: US Managing Partner, Dr Julie Jacobson, distinguished by two decades of public health leadership, was elected to the prestigious role of President-Elect for the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH), the largest association of public health professionals in the world.

Solidifying the financial foundation: Bridges ended the year having paid-off its financial liabilities from 2018, while building a strong financial footing going into 2020 and beyond.

The highlights above reflect progress to build Bridges into a sustainable, non-profit organization that can continue to deliver in the years to come.

02 Project Summaries

The work of Bridges in 2019 spanned its education and health mandates, although the greatest concentration was and continues to be in health. Of the six projects completed in 2019, the two largest, through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Mundo Sano Foundation, were focused on immunization and neglected tropical diseases, respectively.

Innovation: Having an approved technology is not enough. Impact depends on insights across the spectrum from development to scaled delivery to align timely data and the many decisions of different organizations on the path to impact.

- Bridges created a strategic partnership with Mundo Sano, a foundation working on NTDs based in Argentina and Spain. The team supported **analyses of the foundation's plans and created a development pathway for an innovative solution for the improved treatment of intestinal worms.** The plan focused on supporting public sector use of a new product, bringing a sustainable solution (improved efficacy, broader spectrum, and tailored pricing) for the developing world. The new product will bring improved treatment of two types of intestinal worms with a simplified treatment regimen that can be integrated into a single contact with the health system.
- Bridges worked with Janssen Pharmaceuticals to **advance the first major innovation in diagnosing intestinal worms in 50 years.** Janssen and other partners donate hundreds of millions of doses of medicine each year. The donations treat intestinal worms that undermine the physical and educational development of children. Janssen brought its product development know-how and partners together to develop and field-test an artificial intelligence-based automated microscope. Bridges helped ensure the innovation is on track to be well aligned with the needs of developing countries and technical partners.

Partnerships: Successful partnerships depend upon trust, transparency and the inclusive participation of key stakeholders towards shared impact.

- Since 2012, Bridges' US Managing Partner has **chaired the Stakeholders Working Group of the Uniting to Combat NTD partnership** (the governing body) overseeing progress to prevent NTDs. She continued in this role through 2019 and facilitated the partnership's transition to a new partnership model supporting the implementation of the ambitious WHO 2030 NTD Roadmap. The new Uniting partnership now has an expanded mandate across the 20 NTDs in the WHO Roadmap managed by a high-level Board and Consultative Forum with representation across the partnership and endemic countries.
- Bridges supported two efforts in projects based at the Taskforce for Global Health. One project focused on **leprosy** and the new Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy (GPZL) to help strengthen the partnership and identify resources to support their strategic plan. The second project worked with the **onchocerciasis** community to understand the pathway to aligning the community of experts and interested parties towards shared progress in onchocerciasis elimination.

Problem Solving: *Answers to the complex challenges of health and education require both diverse perspectives and collaboration to think and act creatively.*

- Bridges collaborated with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to identify **priority actions to address root causes impeding vaccine coverage for children from 9-24 months**. The work highlighted practical means to coordinate across disease areas and address the systemic organizational, supply, policy, and technical issues that limit progress. It catalyzed extensive an extended discussion by staff of key partner from country to global levels regarding their potential contributions or challenges to progress.
- The World Health Organization asked Bridges to **recommend options for future capacity building efforts on immunization-related topics** as part of WHO’s work to strengthen the capacity of health care workers around the world through education and training. The resulting framework has informed the organization’s near and long-term strategic planning.

Social Investing: *Traditional grants and donations are not enough to drive equitable, sustainable development. We strategically align charitable investments with the interests of communities and their partners.*

- In 2018, a set of private donors engaged with Bridges to develop and evaluate a 2.5-year community-led “twinning” school partnership. **Relatively better resourced schools are working directly with nearby schools to improve education for students in the community**. In Uganda, girls’ schools are working together to implement courses on practical skills to complement academic subjects, including gardening, baking and sewing. In Ecuador, a school in Quito is partnering with number of nearby schools in largely indigenous communities with relatively low university attendance rates. The partnership will focus on innovations and mentoring in math and language teaching as well as supporting student development.
- As part of its strategic partnership with Mundo Sano, Bridges has assisted the Mundo Sano team as they to prepare **new strategic partnerships and investments in support of the new WHO 2030 NTD Roadmap**. Bridges is also helping support communications about their organization, tailoring expanded communications to advance the objectives of the organization.

03 Organizational Developments

Collaboration between Bridges Switzerland and the US: The Bridges Team and Boards worked together to formalize operational aspects for seamless work between the two countries. The outcomes were captured in an inter-company agreement.

Board Development: Board members were instrumental in 2019 strengthening the organizational underpinnings and practices of Bridges, such as finalizing the Safeguarding Policy for work with vulnerable populations. The membership of the Bridges Boards for the US and for Switzerland were aligned to reinforce efficient governance and oversight across Bridges.

Strategic Partnerships: Bridges developed a number of new strategic partners in 2019, including with The Geneva Learning Foundation and the Global Institute for Disease Elimination (GLIDE) in Abu Dhabi. The relationships were captured in partnerships agreements that reflect our aligned purposes and create an efficient, adaptable structure for implementing long-term collaborations to achieve results.

04 Lessons from 2019

- Despite its size and development stage, Bridges is attaining promising results through early partnerships and relationships. Overall, our non-profit partnership model proved a solid platform for well-paced growth.
- As a start-up organization, Bridges remained opportunistic in some of the 2019 work. As the unique value of Bridges continues to be recognized in coming years, we expect the balance of opportunistic and strategic engagements will shift.
- Bridges invested in a number of proposals during 2019 which were not funded. However, by year's end, approximately 80% of our development investments had been converted into projects. Our unsuccessful pursuits presented critical learning opportunities for us to further build and define the organization.
- Individually, the three Co-Founders of Bridges bring decades of experience in development. 2019 highlighted the important complementarities in our skills and strengths. Each person has played important roles in the success of 2019, which collectively position Bridges well for 2020 and beyond.

05 Financials

Funding for Bridges in 2019 was based on 14 grants from ten diverse organizations, foundations, and companies in Europe, US and Latin America. Income and grants received totalled USD 591,788 (USD 179,700 in Switzerland and USD 412,088 in the US), with expenses totalling USD 486,564 (USD 210,939 in Switzerland and USD 275,625 in the US.) Bridges retired its 2018 liabilities during 2019. Bridges financial statements underwent a Limited Statutory Examination in Switzerland by Figest Conseil SA and in the US the Financial Review was conducted by Aiken & Sanders, Inc. PS.

06 Looking Ahead to 2020 & 2021

With our progress solidifying the management and programmatic foundations of Bridges, in the coming years we look forward to continued development, expanded partnerships and new areas:

- Bridges was competitively selected by the Wellcome Trust in late 2019 to provide support to WHO and the wider international community for a new, global, 10-year immunization strategy. Bridges will advance the work of partners and countries to translate the **Immunization Agenda 2030 into concrete implementation steps** including governance, technical aspects, and regional planning.
- We are further developing strategic partnerships. Bridges will support the **RBM Partnership to End Malaria** to engage across a global platform of partners to design its next five-year strategy. Bridges will also support the launch of a new global **Sanitation and Hygiene Fund** creating the foundational policies and country guidance essential to a robust funding model.
- We have an ambitious proposal to **Takeda Pharmaceutical's** Corporate Social Responsibility program to control or eliminate five neglected tropical diseases in the islands of Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu under consideration that reinforces the role of Bridges in innovation and working through partnership both globally and locally.
- Having agreed on an approach with our Boards, we will develop a three-year strategy for Bridges that captures our vision and sets a path for further and ambitious results for our team and organization.

Acknowledgements

Many individuals continue to contribute to the success of Bridges. We are fortunate to be supported by our dedicated Board members and a team of collaborators including student interns, consultants, bookkeepers, and accountants. We also benefit from and appreciate the steady support from our families, near and far, whose love and encouragement nurtures our team's creativity and commitment.

Alan Brooks

Managing Partner CH and Co-founder; Geneva, Switzerland

Julie Jacobson

Managing Partner US and Co-founder; Seattle, USA

Sarah Churchill

Partner CH and Co-founder; Geneva, Switzerland