



Bridges to Development

Advancing resilient communities on a path towards
sustainable development

Annual Report 2020

This report reviews the activities and achievements of Bridges to Development (Bridges) over its second full year of operations, a year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. The report highlights a sampling of Bridges' work and describes, key learnings, organizational development, year-end financials, and future strategic directions.

Highlights from 2020

- **Adapting our work modalities:** Bridges not only weathered the move to remote work during COVID, but the team succeeded to strengthen engagement with partners across diverse communities, bringing in important perspectives and voices to inform our work.
- **Broadening our partner base and impact:** Bridges continued to spread its wings and launched collaborations with six new partners, with collaborations ranging in duration from six months to three years.
- **Growing our team:** From a staff of three, Bridges grew to four full-time professionals, recruited a part-time Manager to lead financial and operational work and formalized an internship program for graduate students.
- **Developing our strategy:** Building on our early experience, the Board of Bridges approved a three-year strategy designed to frame our work against three core goals.

19028 Vashon Highway, SW
Vashon, Washington 98070
USA

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

Examples of impact-driven work in 2020

Implementation of Immunization Agenda 2030

With funding from the Wellcome Trust, Bridges supported the World Health Organization and its core immunization partners to finalize the Immunization Agenda 2030, the world's immunization strategy for the coming decade. Starting in January, Bridges put in place a broad consultative process to develop the operational tools needed to advance implementation at country, regional and global levels. In May, the Bridge's project support was extended by Wellcome and gained additional support from USAID and the International Vaccine Access Center (IVAC) at Johns Hopkins University. Drawing on input across approximately 100 countries and diverse organizations and during a critical global moment for immunization, Bridges has helped partners align around creative approaches critical to ensure the international community can meet immediate needs for COVID response and recovery, while building collaboratively towards the 2025 and 2030 targets set out in the immunization strategy.

RBM Partnership to End Malaria strategy framework

In February, Bridges was awarded a grant to support the development of the RBM Partnership Strategy Framework 2021-2025. Under the leadership of the CEO, the Bridges' team undertook a broad consultative process to co-design the strategic plan across partners, articulating its role within the malaria and broader health community. This strategy outlines the priorities and key activities agreed by RBM members as critical and realistic for the partnership to advance collective efforts in the global fight against malaria over the next five years. Approved by the RBM Board in December, it is based on the principle that ending malaria is central to improving lives in endemic countries, global health security, poverty reduction and reducing inequalities.

Design of a new Sanitation and Hygiene Fund

In March, with grant funds from UNOPS, Bridges began designing key operational components to launch a new global funding mechanism to invest in accelerating progress and sustainable impact for sanitation and hygiene around the globe. Once fully funded at approximately \$2 billion, the SHF aims to invest in national sanitation and hygiene programs, targeting those most left behind, including in health facilities and schools. Drawing on models and expertise from other successful funds, Bridges developed a suite of strategic policies, an application package for countries, and a draft Operations Manual providing key information on the SHF grant-making and grant implementation processes.

Accelerating progress towards disease elimination

In May, Bridges entered into a strategic partnership with the Global Institute for Disease Elimination (GLIDE) to champion bold ideas in pursuit of accelerating disease elimination. The focus of the collaboration is to expand the knowledge base on drivers for successful disease elimination, including the formulation and piloting of innovative solutions to overcome barriers to success. In 2020, Bridges developed and piloted an integration approach that aims to find win-win scenarios for disease programs with the goal of promoting successful cross-program collaboration. After an extensive landscaping, the team is also developing a framework and review tool based on predictable areas of program vulnerability to help identify and constructively address disease elimination or eradication program challenges and weaknesses.

An integrated package to address Female Genital Schistosomiasis (FGS)

Bridges was a founding partner with Bruyère Research Institute and Allied Sciences (UHAS) Ghana in the development of the FGS Accelerating Scale-up Together (FAST) package project. With a consortium of donors* the project aims to scale up proven interventions as an integrated package to improve the detection, treatment, and prevention of FGS in endemic countries. As part of this project, Bridges launched a multi-year effort to design innovative training for professionals at all levels of the health system to improve care for women and girls living at risk. In collaboration with The Geneva Learning Foundation (TGLF), Bridges led the development of competencies with input across the endemic region in Africa, to serve as the basis of the training platform. Bridges and TGLF are now developing the online course and materials to be initiated in Ghana and Madagascar in May 2021.

Shared learning around COVID-19 response and recovery

Through a strategic partnership with TGLF that started in 2019, Bridges contributed to support for front-line health workers in communities, governments, and partners in developing countries across Asia, Africa, and Latin America as they respond to COVID-19. TGLF connects thousands of health workers to systematically share lessons and innovation during implementation of strategies to maintain and progressively recover immunization and other health services during COVID-19. Bridges contributed to the organizational operations and partnership developments of TGLF, as well as understanding the learnings from frontline health workers at a time when such information is invaluable to coping with the challenges of a global pandemic.

Twin Schools Project in Uganda and Ecuador

Bridges continued its support to community leaders in Uganda and Ecuador to promote the educational development of teachers and students across “resource” schools and near-by “partner” schools. In Uganda, approximately 100 additional girls completed a year of schooling in the partner school (Rushanje) due to new and practical subjects being offered with project support. After COVID-19 closed schools, Bridges worked with the local teams in both countries to adapt support to the emerging context and needs. In Uganda, the girls learned to make liquid soap and sewing masks, and Bridges continued support for staff during school closure. An emergency health clinic was set up and food was also distributed to community families in need. In Ecuador, the resource school partnered with a local university to tailor a virtual diploma program in math and language training to the partner school context.

Organizational development and learning

- **Two new team members:** Anastasia Pantelias, who had been working with Bridges on a part-time consultancy basis since February 2020, joined in October 2020 as Associate Partner and our first full-time employee hire. Bridges also recruited a part-time staff member to further develop our financial and operations systems. Cathy Grebert joins us in January 2021 to lead this important area of work, further refining the way Bridges functions as a nimble and effective partner.
- **An internship program:** Bridges is committed to investing in the next generation of development professionals. We appreciate the value of providing a rich learning opportunity as students launch careers in development. In 2019 and 2020, we greatly benefited from our interns' contributions and decided to launch our internship program more broadly, making the opportunity available to graduate students around the globe.
- **Effective virtual platforms:** Bridges joined the rest of the world in learning how to shift from working in-person to engaging with partners and each other virtually. For IA2030, we leveraged

innovative platforms to support country consultations in ways more inclusive and broader than would have been possible without them. We also used virtual platforms to build new competencies with partners for diagnosing and managing FGS, efficiently saving travel costs while achieving greater reach. This has added an important approach to inclusion and engagement to our work.

- **Donating staff time:** Bridges continues to donate team knowledge and expertise to a diverse range of partnerships and organizations with similar missions and goals. This role is at times formal, such as through advisory bodies, or more informal, such as mentoring other organizations seeking to build their own foundations for growth.
- **Serving as ASTMH President-elect:** Julie took on the exciting role as President-elect, becoming President in November at the first ever fully virtual ASTMH meeting. The challenges of activities blocked by the pandemic and a dynamic political climate meant a larger allocation of time to step up to contribute to the Society's mission, including evidence based, equitable decision making based on rigorous and inclusive science that embraces multiple perspectives and views.

Financials

Funding for Bridges in 2020 was received from diverse organizations, foundations, and companies in Europe, US and Latin America. Income and grants received in 2020 increased from 2019 and totaled USD 4,119,738 (USD 1,043,720 in Switzerland and USD 3,076,017 in the US), with expenses totaling USD 1,459,753 (USD 999,836 in Switzerland and USD 459,918 in the US). The surplus in the US accounts is due to a grant of \$2,653,867 from Takeda Pharmaceuticals which was received in December 2020 and will be used in 2021 for the first of a three year project led by Bridges to control and eliminate several neglected tropical diseases in Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea. Bridges financial statements underwent a Limited Statutory Examination in Switzerland by Gestoval Société Fiduciaire SA and a full audit in the US by Aiken & Sanders, Inc., PS.

A three-year strategy for Bridges (2021-2023)

With its expanded partner base, sound financial footing, and larger team, Bridges enters its third year in operation on solid ground. To help guide this next phase, the Board of Bridges approved a three-year strategy in December 2020 (see page 7).

Acknowledgements

The shaping of Bridges continues to depend on a myriad of support from individuals whose contributions are key to Bridges' success thus far, including our dedicated Board members, our external collaborators, graduate student interns, bookkeepers, and accountants. We wish to thank each and every one of for dedicating time and energy to our work. In addition, we are ever grateful for the steady support from our families, near and far, whose love and encouragement continues to nurture our team.

Alan Brooks

Managing Partner and Co-founder; Switzerland

Julie Jacobson

Managing Partner and Co-founder; US

Sarah Churchill

Partner and Co-founder; Switzerland

Anastasia Pantelias

Associate Partner; US

2020 Bridges Interns

Kayla Hendrickson, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, USA

Megan Williamson, University of Geneva, Switzerland

Strategy Overview 2021 – 2023

Our Purpose

Advance economic and social well-being by supporting opportunities for communities to overcome health and education barriers

towards our Vision

Resilient communities on a path towards sustainable development

through these Goals

- 1. Champion and deliver on innovative international development ideas**
- 2. Advance novel solutions to global health and development needs of marginalized communities**
- 3. Scale-up transformative technologies**

Aspirational Goal: Launch a fund to independently pursue big ideas for global change

building upon Enabling Strategies

- Inspire increased commitments
- Bring in new partners
- Strengthen partnerships to achieve ambitious goals that meet the needs of marginalized communities

and our Organizational Approach

- Obtain diverse and reliable funding to sustain a dynamic and creative team of dedicated experts
- Commit to learning, improvement, and continuous growth
- Honour diversity in thought and talents
- Invest in the next generation
- Be courageous and collaborative