

# Annual Report

2024-25



Bridging the Future

BRIDGING  
THE   
FUTURE

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# Chair's Statement

It is a privilege to serve as Chair of the Board of Trustees for Bridging the Future, a charity dedicated to opening up educational opportunities for young people from refugee, forced migrant and asylum-seeking backgrounds through high-quality academic enrichment.

Bridging the Future designs and delivers summer schools and online mentoring programmes centred on STEM, complemented by IT skills training and tailored English instruction. These initiatives are intended not merely to support students, but to challenge and energise them—developing the knowledge, confidence, and ambition required to pursue demanding pathways in STEM related disciplines. Our programmes run both online and in collaboration with world-class academic institutions. Through these partnerships, participants gain access to undergraduate teaching laboratories and specialist research facilities, experiencing an authentic introduction to the culture and expectations of higher education.

Over the past year, we have continued to strengthen our governance, refine our programme delivery, and broaden partnerships. As trustees, we remain committed to careful stewardship of resources, clear accountability, and long-term sustainability. We monitor ground-level outcomes closely, ensuring that our input translates into tangible organisational progress. The collective efforts of everyone involved in the charity are evident not only in the steady growth in applications each year, but in the intellectual curiosity sparked, the confidence built, and the seeds of academic potential realised. For many students, participation represents their first experience of advanced STEM study in a university-style environment—an experience that can be transformative.

On behalf of the Board, I extend sincere thanks to our volunteers, academic collaborators, charitable partners, and supporters. Their commitment and generosity enable Bridging the Future to remain ambitious in its pursuit of educational equity.

Dr Nick Nicolaou

# Trustees' Report

Bridging the Future is a registered charity in England and Wales (Charity No. 1201227), registered at Batford Mill, Lower Luton Road, Harpenden, AL5 5BZ.

The charity supports young refugees, asylum seekers, and forced migrants aged 16–21 by improving access to education, skills, and opportunity. Our work focuses on addressing barriers to higher education through two core programmes: a STEM-focused Summer School at University College London and a year-round mentoring programme. Both initiatives are volunteer-led and delivered free of cost.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit.

## **Trustees**

Nick Nicolao (Chair)

Jack O'Neil (Treasurer)

Sara Abbasi

Daniel Gradeci

# Objectives and Activities

The objects of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), as set out in its constitution, are:

To act as a resource for young people from refugee, forced migrant and asylum-seeking backgrounds between the ages of 16–21 living in the United Kingdom, by providing advice and assistance and organising programmes of educational activities as a means of:

- advancing in life and helping young people by developing their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as independent, mature and responsible individuals;
- advancing education in English and STEM subjects.

To deliver these charitable objects during the period April 2024 to April 2025, Bridging the Future focused on the following principal activities:

- STEM Summer School held at University College London;
- Online mentoring programme providing ongoing academic guidance and support.

These programmes are designed to improve educational access, build confidence, and support progression into further and higher education for young people from refugee and forced-migration backgrounds.

# Review of the Year

## Overview

During the period April 2024 to April 2025, Bridging the Future continued to deliver structured educational support through its Summer School and mentoring programme. Our work focused on improving educational access, building academic confidence, and providing exposure to university environments for young refugees and forced migrants.

The year demonstrated the importance of sustained, supportive educational engagement for young people facing complex challenges. Through volunteer-led delivery, the charity maintained consistent support and meaningful participation across its programmes.

## Summer School 2024

The Summer School, held at University College London, provided a structured academic programme combining English development, scientific learning, and university preparation. Students participated in interactive teaching, laboratory visits, and collaborative learning designed to build confidence, curiosity, and academic motivation.

Participants engaged with a wide range of scientific disciplines including physics, astronomy, chemistry, biology, biomedical engineering, mathematics, and materials science. Laboratory visits within the London Centre for Nanotechnology and the UCL Physics Department gave students direct exposure to real scientific environments and research culture, helping demystify higher education and inspire future aspirations.

The programme also included poster preparation and presentation training, enabling students to develop communication, teamwork, and critical-thinking skills.

### Participation

- Applications received: 39
- Initially selected students: 22
- Average attendance: 12

While the period presented external challenges affecting travel and confidence among some participants, the consistent support provided by the team enabled students to engage with the programme and participate as fully as possible.

### **Learning Outcomes**

- Increased confidence in academic and scientific learning
- Improved communication and presentation skills
- Greater awareness of higher education pathways
- Exposure to university teaching and laboratory environments
- Strong engagement with collaborative learning

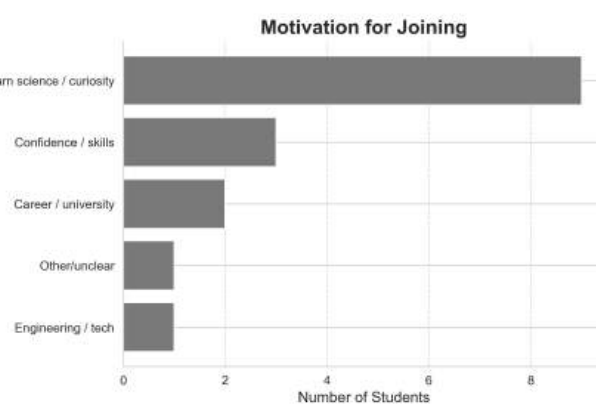
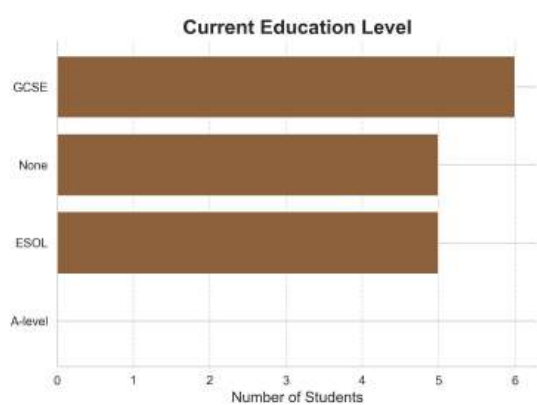
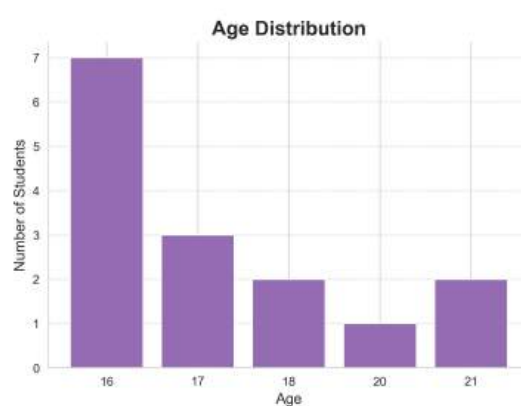
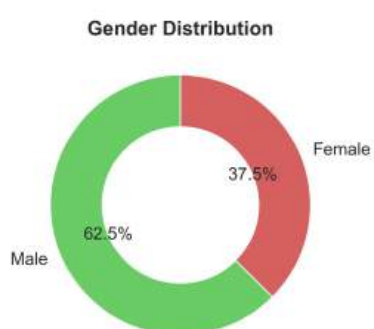
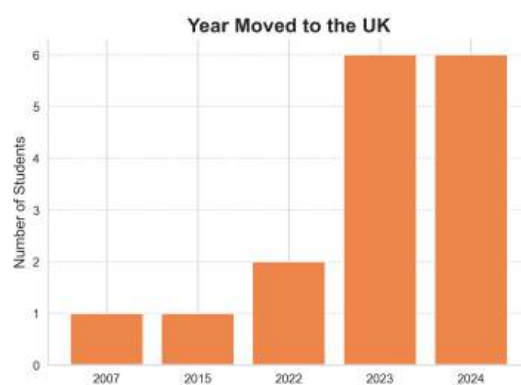
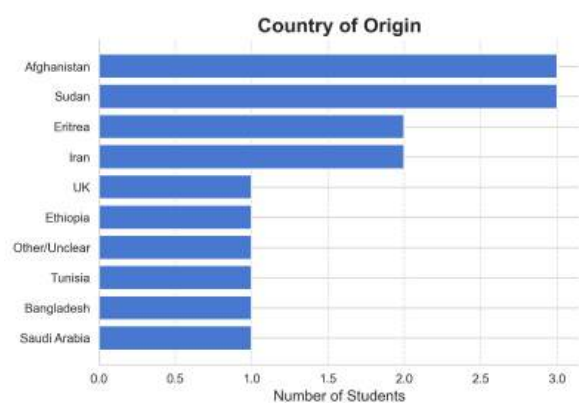
### **Funding**

The Summer School was supported by funding from:

London Centre for Nanotechnology, UCL

Department of Electronic & Electrical Engineering, UCL

## Bridging the Future: Summer School 2024 - Applicant Information





## Summer School Images



## Mentoring Programme

Alongside the Summer School, the charity continued its mentoring programme, providing individual academic guidance and support throughout the year. During April 2024 – April 2025:

- Students mentored: 4
- Online mentoring delivered: 30 hours

Mentoring focused on academic development, study skills, confidence-building, and educational progression. Participants reported increased clarity in their academic direction, improved confidence, and stronger engagement with learning.

The mentoring programme remains an important element of the charity's long-term educational support.

# Impact and Public Benefit

Bridging the Future provides clear public benefit by improving educational access and opportunity for young refugees, asylum seekers and forced migrants. Through structured academic support, mentoring, and exposure to higher education environments, participants gain knowledge, skills, and confidence that contribute to long-term educational progression and social integration.

During the year:

- Students strengthened academic confidence and communication skills
- Participants gained exposure to university-level learning and research environments
- Mentored students demonstrated improved engagement with education
- Programmes supported aspiration toward further and higher education

Beyond academic outcomes, the charity's work promotes confidence, belonging, and motivation, supporting young people in overcoming barriers and pursuing meaningful educational pathways.

# Governance

Bridging the Future is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered in England (Charity No. 1201227). The charity operates in accordance with its constitution and the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the strategic direction, governance, and compliance of the charity. Trustees oversee the charity's activities, ensure that resources are applied solely in furtherance of its charitable objectives, and meet regularly to review progress and impact. Operational delivery of the charity's programmes is supported by Bridging the Future senior team who work closely under the guidance of the Trustees. The operations team typically consists of undergraduate and postgraduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and educators associated with University College London, including the London Centre for Nanotechnology, the Department of Physics and Astronomy, Electronic and Electrical Engineering, Mathematics, and the Institute of Education.

This team leads the organisation and delivery of the Summer School at UCL and coordinates the mentoring programme, ensuring consistent educational support for participants.

# Acknowledgements

The Trustees would like to express their sincere gratitude to everyone who supported the work of Bridging the Future during the period April 2024 to April 2025.

We thank all our volunteers whose dedication, time, and commitment made it possible to deliver both the Summer School and mentoring programme. Their continued support remains central to the charity's work and impact.

We are especially grateful to the researchers and educators who delivered the STEM teaching sessions, and to the teachers from the UCL Institute of Education who provided the English learning programme, helping participants build confidence and strengthen their academic skills.

We extend our sincere thanks to Professor Steve Bramwell (London Centre for Nanotechnology, UCL) and Dr Robert Thomson (Department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering, UCL) for their continued support and for helping provide the funding that enabled the Summer School 2024 to take place.

We also thank Derek Thomas and Fahad Ihsan (Department of Physics and Astronomy, UCL) for their generous assistance during the Summer School and for facilitating access to laboratory space within the department.

The Trustees are deeply grateful to all who contributed their time, expertise, and support to help young people engage with education and build pathways toward their future.

# Future Plans

During the forthcoming year, Bridging the Future will continue delivering its core programmes: the STEM Summer School and the mentoring scheme, building on the foundations established during 2024–25.

For the Summer School, we will strengthen outreach efforts across London by developing new partnerships with charities, schools, and colleges working with refugee and forced-migrant communities. Our aim is to ensure that as many deserving young people as possible are aware of and able to access the programme. By broadening our engagement network, we seek to increase participation and ensure the programme reaches those who can benefit most.

Within the mentoring programme, we plan to enhance the structure and efficiency of online delivery by transitioning to Google Workspace. This will provide a more organised and collaborative digital environment for mentors and students, improving communication, resource sharing, and continuity of support.

Securing a Google for Nonprofits account will mark an important milestone for us, as it will give the charity access to tools and support that will strengthen our digital capacity and outreach. Over the coming year, we will use the Google Ad Grants programme to launch targeted advertising campaigns that increase awareness of our mission and drive potential donors to our charity website. We will use these campaigns to test and refine messaging, improve online conversion pathways, and grow a consistent base of supporters. In doing so, we will work towards establishing a more independent and sustainable revenue stream that reduces reliance on university-linked funding and helps secure the long-term delivery of our programmes.

In addition, we will work to expand the charity’s public presence and accessibility. This includes further development of our website, increasing engagement through professional platforms such as LinkedIn, and creating informative and inspiring educational content for platforms such as YouTube. Through these improvements, we aim to broaden awareness of our work, attract new supporters and volunteers, and increase the long-term sustainability of Bridging the Future.

# Annual Report for the Period



**CHARITY COMMISSION**  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

## Trustees' Annual Report for the period

**From** 29/04/2024

**Period start date To** 28/04/2025

**Period end date**

**Charity name:** Bridging the Future

**Charity registration number:** 1201227

## Objectives and Activities

	SORP reference	
Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document	Para 1.17	Through our programmes, we aim to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• upskill young people from low socioeconomic and/or forced migration backgrounds in English and STEM subjects;</li><li>• support young people in their educational and career pursuits.</li></ul>
Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts.	Para 1.17 and 1.19	The main charitable activities for the public benefit were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Running summer schools, relating to the teaching of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).</li><li>• Operating mentorship schemes for our student cohorts.</li></ul>
Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit	Para 1.18	Yes

## Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

	SORP reference	
Policy on grant making	Para 1.38	N/A



Policy on social investment including program related investment	Para 1.38	N/A
Contribution made by volunteers	Para 1.38	
Other		

## Achievements and Performance

	SORP reference	
Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.	Para 1.20	<p>Within the timeframe of this report, April 2024 until April 2025, Bridging the Future received 39 applications and supported 22 students from low socioeconomic and/or forced migration backgrounds for a 2 week summer school, introducing students to concepts in Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Computing and Mathematics. To support the summer school we recruited 12 volunteers to teach lessons and maintain our safeguarding practices.</p> <p>Subsequently, 4 students were supported through an online mentoring scheme for a total of 30 hours of teaching, with help from 6 volunteer tutors and 4 session moderators.</p> <p>Our students have benefited from tailored teaching and extra-curricular support on applications to higher education institutions.</p>

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**Additional information (optional)**

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Achievements against objectives set	Para 1.41	
Performance of fundraising activities against objectives set	Para 1.41	
Investment performance against objectives	Para 1.41	
Other		

## Financial Review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period	Para 1.21	
Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held	Para 1.22	
Amount of reserves held	Para 1.22	
Reasons for holding zero reserves	Para 1.22	
Details of fund materially in deficit	Para 1.24	
Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern	Para 1.23	

### Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)	Para 1.47	
Investment policy and objectives including any social investment policy adopted	Para 1.46	
A description of the principal risks facing the charity	Para 1.46	
Other		

## Structure, Governance and Management

Description of charity's trusts:		
Type of governing document (trust deed, royal charter)	Para 1.25	Constitution
How is the charity constituted? (e.g unincorporated association, CIO)	Para 1.25	Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees	Para 1.25	(1) Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed [for a term of [three] years] by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. (2) In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

### Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees	Para 1.51	
The charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works	Para 1.51	
Relationship with any related parties	Para 1.51	
Other		

## Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	Bridging the Future
Other name the charity uses	BTF
Registered charity number	1201227
Charity's principal address	Batford Mill, Lower Luton Rd, Harpenden AL5 5BZ

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### **Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity**

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Dr Nick Nicolaou	Chair of Trustees		
2	Mr Jack O'Neil	Treasurer		
3	Dr Daniel Gradeci			
4	Miss Sara Abbasi			
5				
6				
7				
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9				
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11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

Corporate trustees – names of the directors at the date the report was approved

[illegible]

Name of trustees holding title to property belonging to the charity

[illegible]

## Funds held as custodian trustees on behalf of others

Description of the assets held in this capacity	N/A
Name and objects of the charity on whose behalf the assets are held and how this falls within the custodian charity's objects	N/A
Details of arrangements for safe custody and segregation of such assets from the charity's own assets	N/A

### Additional information (optional)

#### Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address

#### Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

Dr Safe Khan, Ms Muslihah Albakri, Dr Massimiliano Ramsay, Guillermo Herrera Sanchez

## Exemptions from disclosure

Reason for non-disclosure of key personnel details

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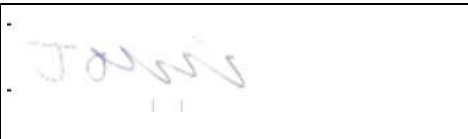

## Other optional information

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## Declarations


The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	Jack O'Neil	Nick Nicolaou
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Treasurer	Chair
Date	22/02/2026	26/2/2026



# Financial Information


 <b>CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES</b>		Charity Name: <b>Bridging the Future</b>		No. (if any): <b>1291222</b>	
<b>Receipts and payments accounts</b>					
For the period from		Period start date	To	Period end date	
		29/04/2024		28/04/2025	
					<b>CC16a</b>

Section A Receipts and payments					
	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Donations	216	-	-	216	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	216	-	-	216	-
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total receipts</b>	216	-	-	216	-
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
WordPress Website costs	139	-	-	139	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	139	-	-	139	-
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total payments</b>	139	-	-	139	-
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	77	-	-	77	-
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>					
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	77	-	-	77	-

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period				
Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>				
		77	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	77	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments accounts)			
		OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval	
		Jack O'Neil	22/02/2026	