Happy 10th Birthday BRIDGE

It is hard to believe that BRIDGE has passed its 10th year of operations. It seems like no time at all since a small group of us was brainstorming potential modules for what was then called the Electoral Administrator’s Course (EAC) in the Australian Electoral Commission’s (AEC) offices in Melbourne. Before we knew it we were piloting the Introductory Module with a small group of AEC staff then translating it and taking it to East Timor for use by the new group of 60 Independent Election Commission staff. In those days, Ben Murray (BRIDGE webmaster) and I worked out of a converted lunch room – the only space available at the time - as we hastily prepared new modules for use in 2001 and 2002.

As the end of 2002 approached, the term “BRIDGE” (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections) was coined by my dear friend Paul Guerin and a team containing Ben, myself and Yvonne Goudie (the current co-ordinator of Democracy and Governance (DG) BRIDGE, were working hard to complete Version 1 for presentation to the original BRIDGE Partners. Version 2 of Elections BRIDGE has now expanded to 24 Modules.

To date, Elections BRIDGE modules have been conducted for almost 9,000 participants in more than 50 countries. Elections BRIDGE Train the Facilitator (TTF) workshops have been conducted in 32 countries for nationals of over 70 countries. There are currently 267 Workshop Facilitators, 40 Accrediting Facilitators and 16 Expert Facilitators spread across the globe. This year already, there have been 14 BRIDGE events conducted in 11 countries. And BRIDGE has been partially or fully translated into more than a dozen languages!

Perhaps the most exciting recent development in BRIDGE is that the Democracy and Governance elements of BRIDGE are being developed and trialled in workshops in numerous parts of the world. In the BRIDGE office, we are now having to refer to “E BRIDGE” and “DG BRIDGE” – a sign that BRIDGE is indeed expanding and moving into
content areas that reflect all of the elements that “Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections” describes. Last year, as most of you would know, BRIDGE received a UN Public Service First Place Award for “Improving the Delivery of Services” in the Asia Pacific Region. This could not have happened without the drive and commitment of people all over the world. I am humbled by the way BRIDGE has been taken up and shared around the globe. There are so many people and organisations to thank for BRIDGE’s success to date.

These include:
- The partner organisations - International IDEA, UNEAD, IFES, UNDP and the AEC - who have so thoughtfully and judiciously steered BRIDGE over the last 10 years. I particularly want to thank the AEC for having the courage and vision to fund the BRIDGE office over that period.
- The various funding agencies who have supported the development and implementation of BRIDGE across the globe.
- The wonderful management and staff of all the Electoral Management Bodies and the various community groups we have worked with.
- The dozens of contributing writers who have served to make the BRIDGE curriculum so rich.
- The committed and enthusiastic participants of the hundreds of BRIDGE workshops so far conducted. And,
- All the hard working and dedicated staff who have worked in the BRIDGE office in the last 10 years.

Finally, to the wonderful group of accredited facilitators who are the engine room of BRIDGE around the world, I am proud to count you as friends and colleagues. In a recent discussion about education, the Finnish Education Minister was asked why Finland topped all the ratings in international education studies. His answer was: “Three reasons. Teachers! Teachers! Teachers!” BRIDGE facilitators are a testament to that. Without your intelligence, skill and compassion, BRIDGE would not have become the life changing program it has proved to be for so many.

So, happy 10th birthday and congratulations to you all! You should all be very proud of yourselves. BRIDGE has been successful because of your passion and commitment. On both personal and professional levels, you have enriched my life more than you could ever know. And for that I am truly grateful.

Ross Attrill - April 2011

A Tribute to Wael Al-Faraj – Rest Peacefully Our Dear Brother

The pages of this website are most often filled with joyous news about the positive effects that BRIDGE has on participants and facilitators alike. It is one of the many reasons why, over more than 10 years, my energy for the program has remained undiminished. However, on a few occasions in those 10 years, we
have had to confront the sad news of the loss of members of the BRIDGE family – none sadder than the sudden recent death of one of the leading BRIDGE facilitators worldwide, Wael Al-Faraj.

It is with a breaking heart that I write this tribute to my dear, dear friend, Wael. I loved him like a brother and all who knew him will no doubt agree with me that it was our privilege to have Wael in our lives.

I first met Wael when he attended a TTF in Melbourne in 2005. My earliest memory of him is of his smiling face as he entered the room, wheeling a bicycle he had borrowed to make the trip to the training venue. It said so much about him. He had only been in Melbourne for a day, he was faced with cycling on the opposite side of the road to what he was used to and in peak hour traffic! But he faced the challenge with a smile and with confidence and reached his destination on time. This is the way he lived his life.

Immediately, Wael became a valued member of the group. He was kind and caring and intelligent and patient and everyone quickly grew to love him. It was also at this time that Wael formed a close relationship with the Arabic speakers in the group, particularly Emad Yousef, with whom he was to work to make BRIDGE a truly Arab program.

Later, they were to form a close bond with Ossama Kamel from Egypt and together the three of them became the heart of BRIDGE in the Middle East and North Africa. I know how much Ossama and Emad loved Wael and I send special condolences to you my dear friends.

In no time, Wael finished his accreditation and was a key figure in BRIDGE courses in Yemen, Egypt, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Jordan and Sudan. Everywhere he went he brought with him enthusiasm, energy and love. He was a gifted facilitator who worked hard to provide the best possible service to participants of BRIDGE. He very quickly became an Expert facilitator – a title he richly deserved. He also played an important role in the piloting of DG BRIDGE.

I have many personal memories of Wael that I will cherish always - our 'huge' dinner together in an Iraqi restaurant in Amman and his visits to my home in Melbourne. But I think the memory that most sums up Wael’s humanity for me involved a dinner we had once in a street café in Sana’a. There were no empty tables so we were invited by an old man to join him. It was obvious that the old man was by no means wealthy, but while we waited for our food, he insisted that we share his. Our food finally came, but the old man said he had to go. We had a wonderful time,
and when we went to pay we were told that an old man had already paid our bill. We were all very touched, but when I turned to Wael, he had tears in his eyes. He was so moved by the old man’s act of kindness. This was typical of Wael. His compassion and his ability to empathise with everyone around him, made him very special indeed.

I will miss your sweetness and your humour, habibi. I feel very lucky to have known you. It is sad to think I will never hear your voice again. Rest peacefully my dear brother.

Wael passed away suddenly on 10 February, 2011. He is survived by his wife Israa and his children Menna and Abdul. Everyone in the BRIDGE offices sends their thoughts and prayers to you in this difficult time.

Ross Attrill – February 2011

Recent Events

BRIDGE Train the Facilitator – Zambia
Dates: 10 – 21 January 2011
Location: Siavonga, Zambia
Hosted by: Election Commission Zambia (ECZ) and UNDP Zambia

Georgian Electoral Administration and Observers
Dates: 28 – 31 January; 3 – 6 February; 9 – 12 February 2011
Location: Batumi, Georgia
Hosted by: UNDP and Georgia Project – Promoting Dialogue and Capacity for Effective National Electoral Processes

BRIDGE Train the Facilitator – Guinea
Dates: 7 – 18 February 2011
Location: Conakry, Guinea
Hosted by: IFES and Guinea
Introduction to Electoral Administration in Dili
Dates: 7 – 10 February; 14 – 18 February 2011
Location: Dili, East Timor
Hosted by: AEC and Comissao Nacional de Eleicoes (CNE)

IFES Gender and Election Training
Dates: 17 February 2011
Location: Washington DC, USA
Hosted by: IFES

BRIDGE Civic Education Training in Afghanistan
Dates: 19 – 23 February 2011
Location: Kabul, Afghanistan
Hosted by: Independent Election Commission

BRIDGE in Sudan
Dates: 20 – 24 February 2011
Location: Khartoum, Sudan
Hosted by: UNDP

EMD Workshop for PIANZEA Network
Dates: 22 – 24 February 2011
Location: Titikaveka, Cook Islands
Hosted by: AEC and Cook Islands Ministry of Justice
Gender and Elections Workshop in Auki, Malaita

**Dates:** 28 February – 4 March 2011  
**Location:** Province, Solomon Islands  
**Hosted by:** UN-Woman

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BRIDGE Workshop in DRC

**Dates:** 14 – 16 March 2011  
**Location:** Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)  
**Hosted by:** UNDP and PACE

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BRIDGE Professional Development Course for Senegal Civil Society Coalition for Elections

**Dates:** 24 – 27 March 2011  
**Location:** Senegal  
**Hosted by:** Goree Institute

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**Upcoming Events**

**BRIDGE TtF in East Timor**

**Dates:** 4 – 15 April 2011  
**Location:** Com, East Timor  
**Hosted by:** AEC and CNE

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**Electoral Systems PIANZEA**

**Dates:** 11 – 13 April 2011  
**Location:** Brisbane, Australia  
**Hosted by:** AEC

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**BRIDGE Gender & Elections**

**Dates:** 4 – 15 April 2011  
**Location:** 4 – 8 April Tatamba, Isabel & 11 – 15 April Binu, Guadalcanal Solomon Islands  
**Hosted by:** UN Woman
BRIDGE Gender and Elections Module
Dates: 16 – 20 May 2011
Location: Pretoria, South Africa
Hosted by: International IDEA

Jobs
There are currently no job openings on the BRIDGE website. Please note: that if you would like to post job opportunities on the BRIDGE website and bulletins, please email the BRIDGE Office at projectoffice@bridge-project.org

Facilitator Bio’s

Ossama KAMEL
Country: Egypt and I hold a French passport as well
Organisation: I am an independent consultant - I work with different organizations; International IDEA, IFES, UNDP, Carter Center
Facilitator category: Expert facilitator
Brief history: I have a University Degree in Accounting from Helwan University in Egypt and a Master’s Degree in Social Development from Sorbonne University in France. I worked in many NGO’s, development projects and have done lots of trainings. I worked for IFES in Egypt for 4 years.

What BRIDGE workshops have you facilitated in? I have participated in many BRIDGE workshops in different countries in the Arab World and Africa. I have participated in delivering BRIDGE in Arabic, English and French. I have participated in 8 BRIDGE TtF courses.

What do you like most about being a BRIDGE Facilitator? Each BRIDGE course is an opportunity to meet new people, learn from their experience and make new friends. It is amazing to see how people open up over the few days of the workshop and share all their human and professional wealth. Meeting other members of the BRIDGE family is always a great pleasure for me.

What are your hobbies and interests? I love archeology and take any available time when I am in a new country to visit its archeological sites. I dive as well, but I guess it is to keep up with my boys who love diving. I enjoy reading about history of religions.

Tell us about a time in your BRIDGE journey that stands out in your memory: In 2006, Wael Al-Faraj was one of the facilitators in the TtF where I was a participant. I grew to like him right away. We spoke a lot and found out that we shared the same opinion on many topics. A lifetime friendship was born at this TtF. Later, we worked together in many BRIDGE workshops around the world. Wael radiated happiness, love, enthusiasm and commitment whenever he went. Yes, it was a lifetime friendship… his lifetime. He left last February. For me he is always there, dreaming and working for a better world.
Kamissa CAMARA  
Country: Mali and France  
Organisation: IFES – African Program Coordinator  
Facilitator category: Workshop facilitator  
Brief history: Since May 2008 I have worked for the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) in Washington, DC. As a Program Coordinator for the Africa Department, I backstop electoral assistance projects in francophone sub-Saharan African. My day-to-day responsibilities include performing extensive programmatic planning, budgeting, project monitoring and evaluation. Throughout my time with IFES, I was able to gain solid field experience from Niger (August - October 2010), Senegal (April 2010), Guinea (March-April 2010), Haiti (April 2009) and Cote d’Ivoire (September 2008). I hold a Master’s Degree in International Economics and Development from a leading French university and am fluent in French, English, German and Bambara.

What BRIDGE workshops have you facilitated in? I have facilitated workshops in Senegal (West African CSOs/Gorée Institute – April 2010); Niger (Showcase to international partners – September 2010 & CENI – October 2010) and Guinea (Training of Trainers/IFES – February 2011).

What do you like most about being a BRIDGE Facilitator? Being a BRIDGE facilitator allows you to get the most out of the wonderful world of BRIDGE and capacity building. You have the privilege of engaging adults in experience sharing on elections and you also benefit from the wealth of knowledge being shared among participants.

What are your hobbies and interests? I love reading, travelling and jogging in the wee hours of the day!

Tell us about a time in your BRIDGE journey that stands out in your memory: During the last training I facilitated in Guinea, my facilitation team came up with this great idea of hosting a storytelling night around a campfire, during which participants shared African tales. While honoring the cultural values of the African continent, the participants and facilitators became even closer and shared something truly special – we discovered the different personalities among the group in an even deeper way and were able to further create an extremely positive learning environment.

Recently Accredited Facilitators

Congratulations to the following Facilitators that have been accredited in the months of January, February and March 2011.
Accrediting Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Which workshop was the Facilitator accredited in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asheq Abdul</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>BRIDGE third training session Kabul; BRIDGE for Political Parties; TIF in Afghanistan</td>
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</tbody>
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Workshop Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Country</th>
<th>Which workshop was the Facilitator accredited in</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hermann Thiel</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Introduction to Electoral Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eddy Kisile Kapula</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>BRIDGE Workshop DRC Mar 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Musavuli Simanga</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>BRIDGE Workshop DRC Mar 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clera Rikimani</td>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>Gender and Elections Workshop in Auki, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands Feb 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amadou Lamine Sall</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>BRIDGE Professional Development Course for Senegal Civil Society Coalition for Elections Mar 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann-Sofie Gerhard-Holm</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>BRIDGE Effective Electoral Assistance Dec 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabio Bargiacch</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>BRIDGE Effective Electoral Assistance Dec 2010</td>
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Did you know?

In the 1989 Namibian parliamentary elections to be allowed to vote you had to be 18 years old or above. The SWA administration issued most of the population with ID cards but a vast number of cards had incorrect information on the person including age. This made determining age of voters a problem. Various guess making methods were used. The most common one, other than comparing with people seemingly in the same age group, was to try to identify a remarkable event for example; a fire that had occurred, skirmish, construction of a road, visit of a political leader, etc. and then determine whether a person was born before or after such an event. Another method was to ask the applicants to try and touch their left shoulder blade with their right hand, assuming that their arm should be long enough if they were of age!
Meet the BRIDGE Office team

Left to right: Raelene Hunt (DG BRIDGE); Ross Attrill (E BRIDGE); Yvonne Goudie (DG BRIDGE); Fatima Tania Tabaja (E BRIDGE); Ben Murray (E BRIDGE)

From the BRIDGE Office

G’day! From the BRIDGE Office, down-under in Australia.

It is a booming start to the year for BRIDGE with events from all around the world filling up the online calendar. We would like to remind all facilitators to add all your events to the calendar prior to them taking place and include a brief outline with a description of the course, organisation hosting and list of facilitators for your event. For further information about adding an event, please go to the following link: http://bridge-project.org/component/content/article/2/807-guide-to-adding-an-event-to-the-calendar

You can follow BRIDGE on:

Facebook & Newslink

We would like to encourage facilitators to use these tools for networking, sharing information, asking questions and just simply having fun with BRIDGE colleagues internationally.

If you would like more information about our social networking accounts, please email the BRIDGE Office projectoffice@bridge-project.org

We hope you have enjoyed reading edition 2 of the Facilitator Bulletin.