

BRIDGING BARRIERS

IMPACT REPORT 2025

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A WARM WELCOME



KEVIN OSEI BEM

Founder and CEO of Bridging Barriers

2025 has been an incredible year for Bridging Barriers – full of impact, growth, and yes, plenty of hard work. But more than anything, it has been a year shaped by the people who make this community what it is.

There's a quote I heard recently that stayed with me: *"No successful person is self-made, but help-made."* And when I think about Bridging Barriers, that really is the heart of our story. None of what we've achieved has happened in isolation. It has happened because so many of you chose to show up, to pour into young people, and to believe in what we're building together.

I'm not claiming to be successful myself – but I can say with complete certainty that I wouldn't be here without the people who have supported me, guided me, and stood beside me along the way. And I suspect the same is true for many of you reading this. Whether you're a mentee finding your path, a mentor giving back, a funder investing in our mission, a volunteer offering your time, or a corporate partner opening doors – you've been supported by others on your own journey.

You've had people who helped you bridge the barriers you faced (pun absolutely intended), and now you're part of helping someone else do the same. That is the power of community. That is the power of us.

So as you read this impact report, I want you to see yourself in it. Every milestone, every story, every young person uplifted – you helped make it possible. We are building something special here, and the truth is we simply wouldn't be here without you.

Thank you for being part of our journey, and for allowing us to be part of yours.

God bless,
Kev

A YEAR IN REVIEW: 2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2025, we supported **over 300** young people across our programmes and initiatives.

Insight Days

Throughout 2025, we partnered with **13 leading employers** (a steep increase from last year's 4) to host **sector-focused Insight Days**. These exclusive events provided young people an immersive glimpse into professional environments, demystified career paths and built tangible skills.



Our esteemed partners this year included:

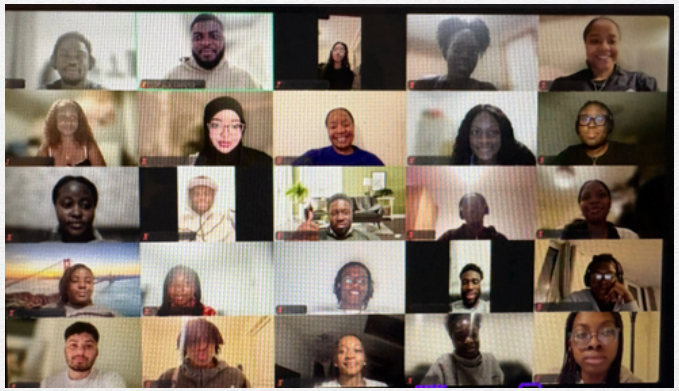
citi
MRA search
Kennedys
Allianz
Weil
RPC
NatWest
FINANCIAL TIMES
UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP
BCO
LLOYDS BANKING GROUP
RATHBONES

Mentoring Cohorts

Our flagship Turning Point mentoring programme continued to be the bedrock of our initiatives. Through our February and October cohorts, we supported **nearly 250 young people** from under-represented backgrounds, providing them with personalised guidance, goal-setting and long-term advocacy from dedicated professionals to navigate their career journeys.



February cohort onboarding

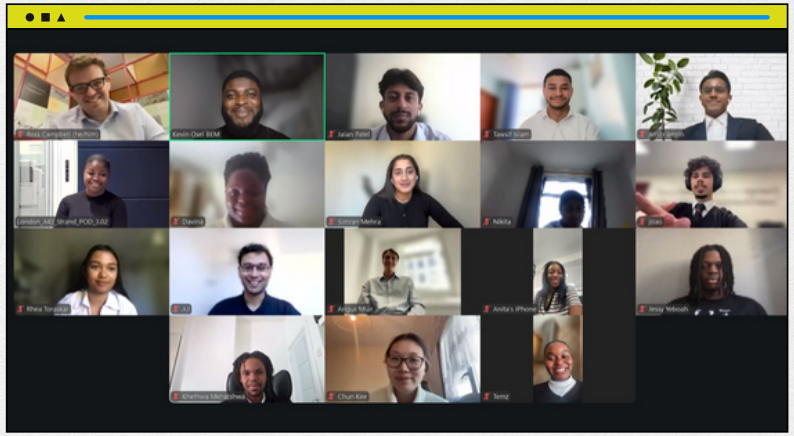


October cohort onboarding

Virtual Masterclasses

Across the year, we delivered four expert-led Virtual Masterclasses, equipping our community with future-focused skills.

Sessions included deep-dive insights into companies like **Diageo** and **Coutts**, alongside practical workshops on "***How to Stand Out to Employers***" and "***Utilising AI for Job Applications***", ensuring our young people remain competitive in an evolving job market.



Lunch & Learn with Coutts

Community & Networking Events

Fostering a sense of belonging and peer support is crucial to us as we want to ensure young people on our programme feel confident and connected as they navigate their career journeys. To supplement our virtual programmes and initiatives, we held **four key networking events** throughout the year.

- **March:** A community kick-off event for new and existing members.
- **June:** A panel discussion on *Confidence, Courage & Careers: Tackling Impostor Syndrome Together.*
- **August:** A celebration for our Turning Point cohorts completing their programme.
- **December:** A landmark 5-Year Anniversary Celebration, honouring the growth of the Bridging Barriers community.



THE IMPACT WE MADE

We measure participant outcomes through pre- and post-programme surveys, interviews and testimonials.

On Mentees

The below statistics reflect the progress made by the most recently completed mentoring cohort (Bridging Barriers Post-Programme Survey, August 2025).

- **94%** of mentees increased their **knowledge** of their desired industry/career.
- **93%** improved **key employability skills** (e.g. writing CVs, interviewing techniques).
- **87%** now feel **greater confidence** in their ability to secure a role.
- **81%** gained a **positive role model** through the Turning Point programme.
- **43%** secured a **career opportunity** during the programme.



ZAREEN

> *The support I have received as a result of this programme, especially from my mentor, has been immeasurable and I truly believe that this experience has expedited both my personal and professional development.... I hope, in time, I can continue the cycle and recreate this positive impact on another young person's life, as [my mentor has] on mine.*







On Mentors

98% felt more confident communicating their experience and guidance

94% improved their leadership skills

64% reported significant personal growth as a result of mentoring

Mentoring through the Bridging Barriers programme has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my professional journey.

Even after the programme officially ended, we chose to continue our meetings and recently, we met in person for the first time at the AWS 2025 Summit. What began as a structured mentorship evolved into a lasting relationship of mutual learning, inspiration, and growth.



MORE SUCCESS STORIES

"This mentorship programme felt like having a compass in unfamiliar territory... It reminded me that growth is faster when you're guided by those who've walked the path before you."

Heritage

"It was a great experience working with the mentees and helping them navigate their own paths... If they can look back and say that I played some part in their future endeavours, then my job is done."

Greg

"Bridging Barriers has been key in helping me secure a graduate role... I am about to embark on the next stage of my journey with confidence and optimism."

Abduraman

"I continue to learn a lot and enhance my leadership skills through mentoring, whilst also giving back. I would encourage anyone thinking about supporting the next generation to engage with Bridging Barriers."

Nneka

"Joining the Turning Point programme has been one of the best decisions I've ever made... I've been able to rebuild my confidence, gain clarity about my path and secure an internship in a role I genuinely love."

Cara

"I've been fortunate to have three brilliant mentees and supporting them on their journeys has been an honour... It's been a privilege to help unlock their potential and witness their confidence flourish."

James

VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNSHIPS

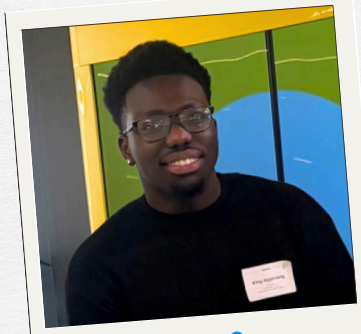




The exceptional dedication of our staff and volunteers remains the cornerstone of our mission. This year, our volunteer force grew significantly in both size and scope. We were privileged to be supported by a talented community of **over 25 volunteer interns**, who brought their skills to nearly every function of our small but growing organisation, including Finance & Compliance, Marketing, Business Development, Project Management, and People (HR).

Collectively, these volunteers contributed hundreds of hours of high-impact work, directly strengthening our operational foundations and helping us innovate for greater impact. From securing new partnerships to organising our in-person events, and from refining our curriculum to streamlining our systems, their professional contributions ensure we can deliver on our promise to young people with excellence and integrity.

We are proud that the skills they have gained volunteering with Bridging Barriers have directly contributed to several of our interns securing new roles and advancing their careers. We are endlessly grateful for the lasting imprint they have left on Bridging Barriers and wish them all the best in all their future endeavours!



KING

My internship with Bridging Barriers was a major turning point for me...The experience gave me both the technical and professional grounding I needed to stand out, so much so that when I applied for a regular cleaning role, the employer saw my CV and selected me for their new Graduate Scheme instead. I recently received a job offer working in operational management and I'm incredibly grateful to Bridging Barriers for the foundation it gave me.

My time as a Project Coordinator with Bridging Barriers played a major role in helping me secure my current position. I gained hands-on experience leading teams, organising events, and communicating with diverse groups. During my interview for my Researcher role at Gillespie Manners, I highlighted how I coordinated workshops and managed challenges effectively. The practical skills and confidence I developed at Bridging Barriers are things I now use every day in my career.



JOSHUA

BRIDGING TALENT WITH INDUSTRY

To translate insight into real-world experience, Bridging Barriers also worked to facilitate **exclusive work experience placements** with leading partner organisations in 2025. These initiatives move beyond simple observation, giving our mentees and alumni **hands-on**, **project-based opportunities** at the forefront of innovation.

SNAPCHAT

A successful collaboration with **Snap Inc.**, through which we sourced candidates for their prestigious **Snap Lens Lab programme**.

Three of our outstanding alumni - **Adaora**, **Asya** and **Cardmel** - were selected to participate in this competitive, fully-funded initiative created in collaboration with the Royal College of Art (RCA).

The 3-week immersive programme provided a deep dive into the future of **Augmented Reality** (AR), allowing our alumni to:

- Engage in interactive AR development and technical workshops
- Receive one-on-one mentorship from in-house experts and academics
- Explore the potential of AR technology within Snap's broader ecosystem





UMG

UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP

Four exceptional Bridging Barriers alumni - **Hera**, **Kiran**, **Jahzara** and **Ore** - excelled during their 3-month summer placements at **Universal Music Group** (**UMG**).

This partnership provided participants with direct access to the heart of the global music industry via the prestigious **AmplifyU Early Talent Programme**, which allowed them to gain:

- Real-world departmental experience and insight across UMG's business units
- Unrivalled industry knowledge that go beyond academic learning
- Lasting professional networks and mentorship with industry veterans to shape their long-term career trajectories

One of our alumni showed such exceptional talent and drive that they were offered a **3-month extension** on their placement - a direct testament to the high-calibre, professional readiness of the young people we champion.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

Our journey in 2025 was marked by significant growth and impact, but it has also brought into focus key strategic challenges. We are proactively addressing these areas to build a more resilient, scalable, and sustainable organisation for the future.

Operations & Infrastructure

- Our rapid scaling has been a testament to the demand for our programmes, but it has also stretched our foundational systems.
- Our current operational infrastructure (including data management, programme delivery logistics, and impact measurement tools) were designed for a smaller organisation.
- To support **long-term, high-quality impact**, we must invest in more robust, integrated and sustainable systems that can efficiently manage our growth and complexity.

People & Culture

- Our current model of relying on volunteers introduces volatility in capacity and places a high administrative burden on our small core team.
- To ensure the consistent, professional delivery and strategic development of our programmes, we are committed to **growing our income and financial reserves**.
- This will allow us to build a **stable, core team** with dedicated roles, reducing operational risk and providing the capacity needed to scale our work effectively.

Corporate Partnerships

- A significant portion of our corporate engagements are currently one-off Insight Days or single work placements. These are valuable but do not create the deep, systemic change we seek.
- Our strategic goal is to convert these successful engagements into **long-term**, **multi-year strategic partnerships**.
- Deeper alliances would allow for **co-created talent pathways**, **more significant investment** in our young people, and ultimately, a **more substantial and measurable impact** of social mobility within industries.

GOALS FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

Building on a year of significant growth, our focus for the coming period is on deepening our impact, scaling sustainably, and building a resilient foundation for the future.

These goals are designed to ensure we can support more young people with greater quality and consistency throughout 2026 and beyond.

Programmes

- Scale total support to at least **500 young people** across all programmes (up from 300).
- Sustain the Turning Point mentoring programme, supporting **200+ young people**.

Career Compass Launch

- Successfully launch our new digital platform, Career Compass, in **September 2026**.
- Achieve a first-year target of supporting **300+ young people** through the platform via resources and personalised tools.

Fundraising & Income Generation

- Launch the **100 X 100 Giving Scheme** to build core strength through regular giving.
- Continue delivering monthly Insight Days.
- Onboard **new corporate partners** to the Turning Point programme for mentoring, masterclasses and events.

People & Culture

- Strategically **expand the core team** from 2 to 5 staff.
- Hire **key roles**: Programme Manager, Operations Manager, and Fundraising Manager.

Operations & Infrastructure

- Strengthen core systems and processes to **support effective scaling**.
- Improve data management and enhance the quality of programme delivery.



SUSTAINING THE MOMENTUM

For Bridging Barriers, 2025 has been defined by powerful growth and we have witnessed firsthand the incredible potential that is unleashed when opportunity meets talent. The challenges of scaling only reinforce the strength of our mission and the critical need for our work. With a clear strategic plan for the year ahead - focused on sustainable growth, innovative platforms and deepened partnerships - we are building an organisation capable of creating lasting change.

Join Us in Making a Difference

Our vision is a future where every young person, regardless of background, has the tools, confidence, and network to build a fulfilling career. Achieving this require a collective effort. We invite you to join us in this mission - as a strategic partner, a mentor, or a support - to help shape a more equitable and dynamic future, together.

You can help us scale our impact in the following ways:

Make a One-Off Donation:

Contribute directly to programme delivery and core costs:

- https://donorbox.org/one-off-donations-841423

Join Our 100 X 100 Giving Scheme:

Commit to a regular monthly donation:

- https://donorbox.org/100-x-100-giving-scheme

For individuals/organisations interested in strategic partnership, mentoring or hosting an Insight Day, please contact us directly at **info@bridgingbarriers.co.uk**.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are endlessly grateful to the funders, partners, and supporters who make our work possible. Thank you for your belief in our mission and your commitment to building a future where talent is the only barrier that matters.

Funders















Corporate Partners & Supporters

















