



Date: 7 September 2026

To Whom It May Concern,

Reference: Rauf Bashir

I am pleased to provide this reference for Rauf Bashir, whom I have known for a number of years through my involvement with Building Bridges. During this time, I collaborated with Rauf on a number of issues and became familiar with his work and his wider contribution to the communities he served. In 2021, I also co-produced a report for Building Bridges examining COVID-19 and vaccine hesitancy, looking at some of the tensions and differing perspectives that emerged among diverse communities during that period. This work gave me further insight into Rauf's approach to engaging with complex and sensitive community issues.

Rauf is a highly capable organiser who is keenly involved in a wide range of aspects of community life. He demonstrates considerable energy and commitment to his work, but what distinguishes his approach is the depth of his engagement. He is not concerned only with organising activities or responding to immediate needs, but is attentive to the wider social context in which community issues arise and to the relationships, experiences and pressures that shape people's lives.

One aspect of Rauf's work that I have particularly valued is his enthusiasm for developing connections with the academic and for creating opportunities to work with students and student volunteers. From my perspective as an academic, this willingness to build bridges between community organisations and higher education is particularly valuable. Rauf recognises the potential for such relationships to be mutually beneficial, bringing additional knowledge, skills and capacity into community settings while also giving students opportunities to develop a much richer understanding of communities and the challenges they face.

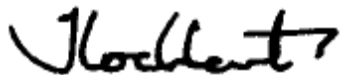
Rauf is also notably careful in seeking to understand the communities with which he works. He thinks seriously not only about the issues people are experiencing, but also about the methods and approaches through which those issues can best be understood. Community work frequently involves circumstances that cannot be reduced to individual difficulties or personal crises. Rauf is alert to the ways in which wider tensions, divisions and conflicts can emerge within and between

communities. He is also alter to the need to approach such circumstances with sensitivity, patience and an awareness of their broader social context.

In my experience, Rauf is a person of integrity and someone who conducts his work in a consistently professional manner. At the same time, he brings an important degree of humility and self-awareness to his role. He is willing to listen, to learn from the experiences of others and to reflect upon his own assumptions and approaches. This openness is, in my view, particularly important for anyone undertaking sustained public-facing work.

I have no hesitation in recommending Rauf. He combines organisational ability, professionalism and commitment with a thoughtful understanding of community engagement and a genuine openness to collaboration and learning. I believe these qualities make him a valuable colleague and community practitioner, and I am very happy to provide this reference in support of him.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Lockhart', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr John Lockhart

Director, Freire Institute

Co-Director, Centre for Community Connectedness and Co-operation

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