**Transcription of Interview with Woman from Russia (RU2)**

**I = Interviewer**

**RU2 = Interviewee from Russia**

**M = Maggie from the Bridges Programmes**

**I: So first of all I’ll just like to start you – start to ask some basic questions just to get that sorted and then we’ll go into talk about inequality. So just to get it on tape, where are you originally from?**

RU2: Russia.

**I: Russia. And your native language is Russian?**

RU2: Russian.

**I: Yeah, obviously. How long have you been in the UK?**

RU2: Six years.

**I: Six years. And how long in Glasgow?**

RU2: Six years as well.

**I: Six years, so you came here immediately?**

RU2: Yeah.

**I: And what is your status?**

RU2: Refugee, oh no refugee, sorry no, we receive indefinite leave to remain and we apply for refugee status, but we didn’t get it. But it was like, I don’t know how to explain, some programme in Home Office and people who stayed quite long in the UK was quali… was qualified as… I don’t know – not qualified, I don’t know which word is better. Not offered, but get

**I: Granted?**

RU2: Yeah, this status – indefinite leave to remain [unclear].

**I: Ok, and when did you get that?**

RU2: Let me think, I was pregnant, two… two years ago, September. September 2009. September 2009, yeah.

**I: Can I ask you how old you are?**

RU2: Yes, 38.

**I: 38, ok. And how many children do you have?**

RU2: Two.

**I: Two. And how old are they?**

RU2: The oldest one is 12 years old and this one two years [she had her son with her].

**I: It’s quite a long time between them.**

RU2: Yeah [unclear].

**I: Are you a single parent?**

RU2: No

**I: No. You live with your husband?**

RU2: Mhm.

**I: Yeah. Where do you live?**

RU2: Ibrox.

**I: Ibrox? Pretty close to here.**

RU2: Yeah.

**I: And what type of accommodation?**

RU2: Just tenement, Glasgow tenements. Four floor house.

**I: Is it – and you have all of it? Four floors?**

RU2: No, no, no no.

**I: No, it’s just a flat?**

RU2: I mean the building, sorry, four floor building.

**I: Yeah, and you have a flat?**

RU2: Yeah, from Housing Association.

**I: Ok. Right. Do you receive any benefits?**

RU2: Ahah

**I: No?**

RU2: No.

**I: Do you have a job?**

RU2: No.

**I: No. But you’ve had a job here in Glasgow?**

RU2: No. No sorry, I had, but it was just one day job. One day, you know, maybe you hear the story?

**I: I heard a bit about it but I’d like you to tell me.**

RU2: Ok, no problem at all. So this job was offered me through Regeneration Agency. Have you heard about Regeneration?

**I: Yeah**

RU2: Of course, because it’s very popular here. So I registered with this agency and as I understood, I registered here in the Govan area, but they have like a common database. Therefore, the staff from another office can have access to my CV, because I – this job was offered me from another one, from another Regeneration which is placed in the North part of Glasgow, near from Sighthill if you know this – it doesn’t matter. So what it was. It was tiny construction company. Actually this company only owner and that’s it and he was looking for some admin support in his office, so I had interview with him and he was quite happy with everything so with my English and education – all this kind of stuff. So when I came – so it was just 8 hours per week, you know why, because the owner is ill, quite ill, he has cancer and probably before, I think he didn’t even work. He had a quite big gap because of his health condition, but lately he started to feel better after treatments, he decided to reopen his company – just keep his mind out of illness and just to do something. So therefore he was looking for some admin support. And I came on Tuesday after interview so this – we had very helpful day from my point of view. I just take some changes in the excel table. It was like, how to explain, it was like the budget parts. [*Son makes noises with toy*] Sorry, sorry. [Says something in Russian to her son]. So next day, Wednesday, when I came, he invite me to his office and explain me he was quite happy with everything – what I’ve done on Tuesday – but unfortunately because I didn’t have any experience in this particular area - construction, of course I have never worked – so because I need quite a lot of support and super… and I need someone who can supervise me and because of his health condition he can’t do this. So you see he changed his mind in just one night, but I think maybe it’s normal when you are not well. So probably he would like to work with me, but in his situation it will be difficult for him because I need a lot supervision. Something like this. It was his explanation, so… and he paid me for doing 1 and half day and also he put my details in diary and he told me in the future, he will be better and he finally get a project, because he’s only working on the budget plan of this project. He didn’t – he hasn’t get finally this project. He’ll probably invite me back. So… I’m not sure if it’s happened, so. And then, of course I was sad. Everyone at Bridges saw me this day because I was crying. But [unclear]. Also last week I had an appointment with my caseworker in the Regeneration Agency and she told me that he send an email from the Regeneration through which I got this job, North of Glasgow, so and this email was quite positive, so there is no wrong with me. Just because the main reason why this happened is [unclear] because of illness, his condition.

**I: Right, so you don’t think it has anything to do with you? It was…**

RU2: Hopefully, yeah. So but, actually I can’t tell, I can’t know the truth, but what I hear was everything was fine and even my English, because actually I was worried about this, but yeah.

**I: Yeah, ok. Did you have a job back in Russia?**

RU2: Yeah, I did. Yeah, in Russia I worked every time except one half year when I was in maternity leave with my first son.

**I: Okay. Have you had any education here in Glasgow?**

RU2: Yeah, I finished Cardonald College. I have HND in administration and [unclear]. Yeah, I just finished, finished college last year.

**I: Last year?**

RU2: Yeah, 2011.

**I: Ok. Did you get any education at home as well?**

RU2: Yeah, yeah, at home I finished – let me try to explain, erm teachers’ training university.

**I: Teacher training?**

RU2: Yeah, it’s not like here so for example here in the UK, I don’t know how about your country, but university has a different departments. And in one university you can study as a doctor, as a teacher, but in Russia all university for different areas separate. For example if you want to be teacher you go to teacher training uni. If you want to be a doctor, you go to like a medicine university, something like this. So I finished, yeah, I finished this one, but I used to work at school only one year and then I moved to, let me see, like a, like a city council office. So I was doing just (unclear]. And then I moved again to another office, so this, this organization was dealing with estate. For example, in Russia if you buy property, you have to register your right for this property, so [unclear] down this. This [unclear], print out the special certificate, which says your year, this means who exactly have right for this property. So it was estate organization. And then I moved in city council as well. It was the department which controlled rent payment for city council property. Land or building or something. For example, if you’re self-employed and you need office, you rent this office from city council and you have to pay money and I controlled this payment.

**I: Right, so you’ve done a lot of different things.**

*[Maggie enters the room]*

*M: Sorry*

**I: Hello**

RU2: Hello

*M: Hello. Is this your kid?*

RU2: Yes.

*M: He’s your kid.*

**I: Enjoying it**

*M: What’s your name?*

RU2: Andrew.

*M: Andrew. That’s a very Scottish name for a Russian boy. Is there a Russian version of Andrew?*

RU2: Andrej

*M: Andrej, alright. Well, okay, fair enough. Are you having a biscuit?*

RU2: [says something in Russian]

*M: Do you think there might be a second biscuit somewhere. Well, you’ve got a second.*

**I: There is a second one. He’s lucky. Right, so can you just…** [*Andrew calls for his mum*] **Yeah, can you just tell me a bit about yourself? Like how would you describe yourself?**

RU2: Hmm, interesting question. Hmm, I don’t know. I think I am kind of woman who can’t stay at home just doing housework because it’s for me, like now it just make me crazy. Because last year it was difficult for me, but I was busy. I understood that I make something which will be useful in my future, like it’s local education so in spite that my Andrew was just one year old, I was [unclear] so busy. But this year it’s quite, quite, I don’t know, depressed for me I can say, so because I have life but nobody just phones me and I just all day is home with Andrew, it’s very difficult. Especially, if I work most part of my life. So even here when I came to Glasgow I tried to do, tried to do voluntary work every time. I just, I just stop voluntary work when I was pregnant in the last months, maybe 7th or 8th month, just before I give birth of Andrew. And, so I can say that I’m quite active, social, sociable person. High motivation, I think. Yes, I think I [unclear] say about me. But myself, what else? I like to be with people, work with people.

**I: What would you say is most important to you? Is it being a mother or is it being a woman, is it being – is it working, is it what…?**

RU2: Hmm, it’s difficult to say, because, of course if you’re a mother, it’s most important thing for you. But I don’t want to be only mother. For me it’s to be a working woman also important as be... I like to be not, let’s see how to explain, a woman with a full life; family life, working life, social life [unclear] you understand what I mean?

**I: Yeah, I get that. Is it, does it mean a lot to you in your life here being a refugee?**

RU2: No, I don’t think so.

**I: It doesn’t affect you in your…**

RU2: Absolutely. Maybe, maybe that I’m foreigner person – it’s affect me, but no not refugee.

**I: Ok. How does it affect you to be a foreign person?**

RU2: I think for example especially when situation is everyone try to… it’s no, no so good as before even two-three years ago it was like better. So I think now when I apply for a job, the employer first of all try to choose anybody from Scottish people. Of course it’s normal, I understand, because they are local, they need to be first and I think it’s a huge problem for foreign women or men. So for example, my husband didn’t have this problem because he have quite specific skills. He is ship engineer and probably in Glasgow now there are no so many people who has similar skills. But I only admin and plenty of women, men – so plenty of people can use pc now and type letters or fill in forms, so I think maybe I don’t have any specific skills which help me to find a job. I can say [unclear] I understand what I can do or what I can’t.

**I: Ok, let me just – try to imagine if you were a Scottish person, how do you think you would look at [interviewee’s name]? How would you describe [interviewee’s name] if you were a Scottish person?**

RU2: Quite friendly. Quite friendly person. This positive attitude to life. Well hard-working, because now it’s not my own words. I hear this word very often from college, from my lecturers and from girls who supported me in this language for example. He checked all my projects, all my assessments. Just to correct English mistakes. So yeah, I think Scottish people could tell that [interviewee’s name] is quite hard-working, so…

**I: Do you think they would consider the fact that you are foreign?**

RU2: Sorry?

**I: Do you think they would think about the fact that you are foreign?**

RU2: Yeah. Yeah, of course, of course.

**I: And in what way, do you think they’d think about it if you can say?**

RU2: Hmm. I don’t know. Some… for example in college it was even er like good thing for me. Not… because teachers, lecturers every time told me that in spite I am foreigner, I was doing well and even better than local students, Scottish college. So but… Erm, but for example, when I try to apply for work I think employers first of all think about my accent. Especially for public work - even in shop, because I think maybe somebody doesn’t want to have staff with accent – even in shop. It’s my point of view, maybe I’m not right, but I think about it. And… I don’t know probably, for example, if I type letter, I – especially in the first time when I get a job I need somebody who can check my mistakes. So probably… probably in my case I need more, more time to settling in in job. So for example – my example is my one day job in construction company, because it was a new area for me. I even didn’t know [unclear] because it was a specific word I needed to learn it. So because for local people it may be more easy [unclear because son keeps screaming mum] because anyway it’s new work but in general all of the English, but for me I think I need more time [*speaks Russian to son*]. Sorry.

**I: No worries. What does he want?**

RU2: I don’t know [*speaks Russian to son*].

**I: Erm, so do you think you have changed from the person you were in Russia to the person you are now?**

RU2: Could you explain me what you…?

**I: Yeah, if you think about how you would have described yourself when you lived in Russia. Do you think that’s different now?**

RU2: Aaah. No, I don’t think so. No.

**I: Right. So try to explain to me what equality means to you.**

RU2: [long pause] Hmm. Equality, equality. So I think this mean again for example if you apply for a job, the employer shouldn’t look at your nationality. They should look only on your skills and qualification. It’s what means for me. And… and everywhere, for example, if I apply for nursery the [unclear] teacher, er, the teacher doesn’t – doesn’t, er, has to, for example, cancel our application because Andrew is a Russian – from Russia or something like this. But except – except work market to be honest I have never, I have never seen this kind of attitude to our family, I mean in school – the school of my oldest son, Alexander, no. Actually, I think the… this works, it really works in Scotland, but when you apply for job, it’s from my experience sometimes I think it doesn’t work.

**I: Ok. So you haven’t experienced any discrimination in general?**

RU2: No, face-to-face no, no, never.

**I: No, okay. But you think that in relation to job market it happens?**

RU2: Yeah, I think so.

**I: Ok. So, yeah, this is sort of the same, do you feel like you have equal opportunities to everyone else in Glasgow?**

RU2: Generally yeah, yes. So for example last month I applied for City Council nursery [unclear], and I got place for Andrew without any problems so especially because I was doing work placement through the Bridges Programmes, so and I brought two letters from one was from Bridges, one was from my work placement, just to support my application form and it is – maybe you know, it is quite difficult in Glasgow to get a place in City Council nursery because they are cheap in comparison with the other one and I get this place without any problem and everyone was very friendly I think, the staff.

**I: Ok, so do you pay for this yourself?**

RU2: Yeah. Yeah, it’s another story so.

**I: Ok, but it might be a part of it because…**

RU2: Yeah, yeah, I would like to tell you.

**I: Yeah, because I know it’s difficult to get childcare, so…**

RU2: Absolutely. It’s very expensive, especially so – there is a rule, a law in UK, you have to work so for example if your partner work, works sometimes, you have to work as minimum 16 hours per week to get some money back from government. For example, it’s maybe 70 %, maybe less, the maximum is 70 % but because I don’t work, so but I want to have all this time, again maybe for to do work placement or… [*Andrew is making noise with toy*].

**I: No, I’m just worried I can’t hear what…**

RU2: or even to go to agency, a recruitment agency to… for registration, because I think it’s quite [unclear] if you go to recruitment agency with this baby in a pram, it’s… Yeah, I need to pay for this. Andrew goes to nursery two and half day and I pay 160, £160 per month. It’s too expensive, but anyway I don’t work and this money is quite… so… not important, it’s not huge [unclear].

**I: But this can only work because your husband works then? He earns money right?**

RU2: Yeah.

**I: Yeah, so if he didn’t you wouldn’t be able to afford?**

RU2: Yeah, yeah, sure, sure. Only till three year because the kids from three years old have 16 hours free in nursery, but Andrew now is only two in three months.

**I: Ok, right. Do you think you have better opportunities here compared to in Russia?**

RU2: [long pause] I don’t know. Now I can’t answer this question because still – I still don’t have work but generally yeah, generally yeah. So for example if you want to go to study you can go without any problem. And even I think compared with Russia, it seem easier for foreign people to go to uni here. So for example if I would like I could go, but I’m just quite tired to be a student… to be learning, so…

**I: Yeah, yeah.**

RU2: But, yeah. If, so again, if comparing with Russia I think the foreign people don’t have so much opportunities as we have here. They have lots of problem with documents [unclear], so here it’s not easy to get a status, I agree, but if you have a status you have plenty of opportunities. Just try to do anything. But in Russia no. Still so… like if you have anybody who works in this company, they can recommend you to owner of this company and this networking work in Russia very well. Here as well, but not so, not so active.

**I: No, yeah. Have you ever heard about the Equality Act or the Public Sector Equality Duty? Have you heard these things?**

RU2: No.

**I: No. Do you know in general what rights you have?**

RU2: I think have the similar right as a local person except to take part, taking part in election.

**I: Ok.**

RU2: So because we are not citizenship, we don’t have local passport, British passport, but all rights is the same, are the same.

**I: Ok, yeah. Would you mind telling me a bit about how your everyday life was in Russia?**

RU2: Like a normal life, typical Russian family. So we worked full-time with my husband so Alex, my oldest one, was – attended nursery full-time as well, so we had little garden, so especially spring and summer weekends we spent in the garden, so it was outside the town. It was very good [unclear] in Russia. And tried to go for holiday every year during the summer, so just it was quite fine life. Quite good.

**I: So do you think you ever experienced any inequalities in Russia?**

RU2: [long pause] Sorry, could you explain?

**I: Erm, for instance, was it more difficult for you to get a job because you were a woman compared to your husband or?**

RU2: You mean in Russia?

**I: Yeah.**

RU2: No.

**I: No?**

RU2: No, because I finished uni in this big city which was in [unclear]. I was from very small town, so after finishing uni, I came to my town and I applied for a job to the school which I finished, so the teacher knowed me very well so I get this job very quickly. So for example, I finished uni in June and I start my job in the middle of August, just one month. No, it was [mumbling]. You see maybe, now I’m just thinking about it, sometimes maybe it’s even easier for woman to start their career after maternity leave because nursery in Russia are not so expensive. Most of them are city council, not like here, so there is still problem to get a place but it’s possible and even if you – if you don’t work, it’s not difficult for you to pay for place for childcare. Yeah, and this is a very good point, which you don’t have here. Here the childcare is actually problem. And… But there’s actually here some jobs are more for men than for women, for example, police in Russia, so I think only 10 % staff of police are women, at most…

**I: In Russia?**

RU2: Yeah in Russia, in Russia, I’m talking about Russia, yeah. And also the top management level for men. It’s quite, I think it’s not only Russian problem, it’s wider world problem, yeah.

**I: Yeah, yeah. Right. So in general you were actually quite happy in Russia?**

RU2: Yeah.

**I: So could you tell me a bit about your everyday life here in Glasgow?**

RU2: I think now after we get the status, it’s became quite similar to Russia, but only, but except we don’t have any relatives here who can support us. And especially with kids and also, because for me it’s quite difficult to find a job. It’s my main negative things about living here, but generally. So and, also if in Russia we have our own house – here we couldn’t. But maybe just nowadays, maybe we can buy our own house later. We will see. But still hope.

**I: So we have already discussed it a bit, but in relation to you not having a job, do you think that has anything to do with inequalities?**

RU2: You mean here?

**I: The society being inequal in some way, unequal. Yeah, here.**

RU2: Equal and unequal, I don’t know. I think more equal than unequal. Again, as I said before, I have never – I have never seen any unequal acts directly. No. I just maybe heard about it, but from my experience, like experience here, no, I can’t say.

**I: So you haven’t had a time where you’ve felt excluded here in Glasgow?**

RU2: Sorry, what do you mean?

**I: Erm, how can you put it? An example of a time where you haven’t felt like, or where you felt like people weren’t including you. I don’t know if that’s the right way to put it.**

RU2: [long pause] Sorry, I think I still don’t…

**I: No, just in general you feel like you’re being included into society here?**

RU2: Aaaah, sorry sorry, I got it. Erm, yeah I think yeah. Because I’m member of Christian church here, not Russian one, Scottish one, so I can’t say that I am active member, but anyway member and I meet also people – Scot… local people who now is my friend and what else. So, also, also I’m member of Russian centre [name of centre] in Glasgow. This is quite big centre and we have plenty of different event, like New Year Party or Easter Party, this kind of stuff. So because I work as a Russian language teacher, it’s a voluntary job, it’s here every Saturday in this centre. Of course I’m involved in life or [unclear] this centre. So yeah I think I can say yes on this question. I’m not feel alone.

**I: No?**

RU2: No

**I: Okay. Do you think it would be easier for you to get a job if you didn’t have an accent?**

RU2: Maybe… maybe if I had a better – better English, yeah I think it would be easier. Because especially now, at home of course I speak Russian, so for me only [unclear] English with my work placement [35.06], so now from next week, I have on two days work placement. It’s going to be nursery, again admin support. So of course I watch TV and try to read English book, but anyway - it’s helpful, but I think the most important thing if you want to improve your English it’s have to everyday communication in English, daily basis communication, yeah. I need more practice. It is my problem.

**I: Ok. Right, so you already said that you’ve got help from the Regeneration Agency or you’re getting help and your getting help from Bridges as well. Do you get help from anywhere else to try to find a job?**

RU2: No, no, no. No, I’m planning to do. I’m planning to register with some recruitment agency, but so again, because before Andrew was in nursery only one day and it was the day when I was doing my work placement so beyond this I didn’t have time. But now because he is in the nursery two and half day and two day I am doing, I will be doing work placement, so anyway I have a half day – it’s a Monday – and this day I planning to visit some recruitment agency. Hopefully, then they will help me. We will see how it’s work. I don’t know, because from my friends, only one was registered with recruitment and in her case they were helpful, but it was three years ago. I don’t know- what’s happened now when the situation has changed. We will see.

**I: Yeah. Do you feel like the organisations where you get help now – do you feel like they understand your needs? They know how to support you?**

RU2: Yeah, I think so.

**I: Do you think you have different needs from for instance a Scottish person?**

RU2: Generally no, I don’t think so. Maybe… maybe because I don’t have work, plenty of work experience here in this country here – I’ve done voluntary work, I still have work placement – but I have never done any paid work here. Maybe this affect my employability, maybe yeah. But be honest, there are plenty of Scottish women that don’t have work experience as well.

**I: That’s true yeah. Right, I think I just have one question left. What do you think the future holds for you?**

RU2: Finally get a job and if I get a job, so I think I’ll start new life actually. To feel myself that I can do anything, that I can be helpful, all this kind of…

**I: So getting a job would mean a lot to you?**

RU2: Now I think it’s the main problem for me to get a job. Because I have family, two sons, I’m not planning to have more kids. I think to be honest, everything is fine even now. We don’t have plenty of money, but we have enough money to manage our life. But anyway also it’s maybe – job for me it’s not only money. It’s for to feel myself more confident, more helpful, something like this. But of course money is important, important as well, but I can’t say money is the most important thing for me. If for example my husband doesn’t work, didn’t work anywhere and we were on benefits, but we are not so yeah, it’s good to have extra money, but to be a helpful member of society is what I think for me important as well.

**I: Yeah, yeah. And what do you think will help you get that, get that job? Can you…?**

RU2: Hmm, improving my English first of all. And get more experience, because experience it’s not only good for English, it’s even good for my confidentiality [Editor’s note: confidence], because if I have a work placement here or voluntary work, I start to understand like what working environment looks like here in the UK, because it’s quite different from Russian.

**I: Ok.**

RU2: So, anything else?

**I: No, I think that’s it. Do you have anything you would like to…?**

RU2: No.

**I: Ok, no, ok that’s good. Thank you very much.**

RU2: No problem.