

CONNECTING CULTURES

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Journal of English Language Partners New Zealand



**ENGLISH
LANGUAGE PARTNERS
NEW ZEALAND**

Working with Migrants and Refugees

Formerly ESOL Home Tutors

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Kia ora Welcome

English Language Partners' programmes focus on the immediate needs of learners. These are often related to developing the language skills to effectively access everyday life in New Zealand.

Our services are flexible and accessible to learners. All are part-time, suited to adult migrants who have many responsibilities and pressures on their time.

This issue of *Connecting Cultures* gives an overview of our growing suite of programmes, with a more in-depth focus on English for Employees.



English Language Partners New Zealand is clear that, with a commitment to providing high quality services, we cannot work with every immigrant that wishes to improve their English. A major challenge for the organisation is managing community expectations and ensuring equity for learners by consistently implementing a clear system of prioritisation. The knowledge of the community we draw on to make these decisions can also help us decide which other partners we need to work with, and what our advocacy will best focus on.

This programme has been running for just on one year, with over 700 learners participating in the 2009 year alone. It offers more specialised course content relating to the language and culture of the workplace, which those already in employment require in order to move ahead confidently in their careers.

I'm delighted that Hon. Dr Jonathon Coleman, Minister of Immigration, has contributed to our Guest Word column with his views on the importance of immigration and its role in the functioning of our society. Our organisation provides a vital link to newcomers who are keen to settle in and to make a significant contribution to their new country as fully-participating citizens.

The organisation has just concluded a comprehensive Organisational Review. Please visit our website to see the Review document and its 39 recommendations.

At our May conference we will launch our new Strategic Plan, which will shape our organisation's work with the community over the next three-to-five year period. I am looking forward to working together with our members and stakeholders to bring its principal ideas to fruition.

Claire Szabó,
CEO, English Language Partners New Zealand

English Language Partners New Zealand

Who we are 250 staff and 3,000 volunteers working with 8,000 migrants and refugees in 23 New Zealand locations

What we do Provide a range of voluntary and paid, one-to-one and group, English-language tuition and settlement support services

Where to find us For local contact details and training dates see www.englishlanguage.org.nz

Join us! Train as a volunteer home tutor

Happy mums *happy families*

Caring, patient and passionate are three words used to describe Denise Bryant.
Michelle McCullough / Photos by Jane Ussher

Denise Bryant teaches English Language Partners' 'English for Mothers of Babies and Toddlers' (MOBAT) class, in Dunedin. Over the past five years she has helped around 40 non-English speaking migrant women make the transition into New Zealand life.

MOBAT, formulated exclusively for refugee and immigrant mums, helps build language skills and social confidence, equipping mothers with the skills to face the challenges of family life in a new community.

A unique element of the class is that mothers can bring their children along, eliminating the need to find childcare.

Denise, who has a double major in community and family studies from the University of Otago, also has a graduate diploma in second language teaching. She believes the class, which at present has between eight to thirteen women attending, is a valuable resource for migrant women who want to settle into New Zealand life.

"Not many programmes aim to improve and empower immigrant women's lives as they raise their family," she says. "It's aimed at learning English, but a lovely thing happens when women network in any culture;

they collectively improve their confidence and extend their learning capabilities beyond what they can learn alone."

Happy mothers equal happy families. "It's really hard beginning a family without extended family support and in an unfamiliar cultural environment, with a language barrier."

Denise, who is assisted at the MOBAT classes by four or five "fantastic volunteers" says the mothers learn about nutrition, Kiwi cooking and recipes, and Plunket – a uniquely New Zealand organisation.

"We have a language focus that is built into a topic of interest to the group – we cover reading, writing, listening and spelling indirectly as we cover learner needs. We introduce New Zealand cultural practices, legal responsibilities, links with social agencies, have speakers to inform us of their services, learn about health, education, community activities and services, share experiences. I do follow a format but am happy to stray if a learning opportunity presents."

Lilly Azhar, from Iran, is attending the MOBAT class. She says the class gave her the opportunity to learn more about New Zealand life, improve her language skills and discuss, with other women, problems faced when immigrating to a new country.

"I moved to New Zealand in July and my English was not good. This class has been very good for my health."

Denise says the class also gives learners the opportunity to make friendships and learn about other cultures. "We enjoy multicultural celebrations and encourage learners to share their customs and foods. Incidental learning opportunities often present, so we are learner-directed with the programme, but we try to do independent learning. We are currently working towards creating a cookbook with class demonstrators, tasting and recipe writing."

Denise's work with migrant women was recently acknowledged when she was nominated for an Unsung Hero Award organised by *The Star* community newspaper in Dunedin.

Nominated by English Language Partners' Dunedin manager Paul Naidu, Denise says, at the time, she was humbled by the nomination but felt she was undeserving of the award. "Every volunteer agency is only as good as each member collectively. I'm really fortunate that our work involves receiving positive feedback and support so you do feel appreciated; many volunteers give more of themselves than me."



Paul says he nominated Denise because of her commitment. "Denise loves people and loves teaching learners English to help them feel confident in their new 'home away from home' in Dunedin."

It takes a whole village to raise a child and Denise says "I think it takes all of us doing what we can to help other people from different cultures, religions and beliefs to settle in Dunedin. It's what I would like if I had to live in a foreign country."

Another of Denise's learners, Nafisa Jafari, also from Iran, says she enjoyed the class so much she wishes it happened more than twice a month.

"I love it. I enjoy it so much, I wish it was more often than fortnightly because they are all lovely. I can take my baby which is so important for me and the environment is friendly," she says. "Denise is patient with people like me, she's passionate and caring. She tries very hard."

Denise says she originally joined English Language Partners because she liked their focus and philosophy and the support they provide for volunteers.

"Teaching is demanding but the learners have to do the hard work to improve their language abilities; they need to be motivated and take every opportunity they can to practise. I get to meet so many lovely students, teachers and staff, and enjoy the opportunities to extend my second language teaching skills.

"I thought I might try this and I did; and I'm still in this field in ways I never imagined. It is nice to be part of a process that makes a real difference in others' lives." ✨



"A lovely thing happens when women network in any culture; they collectively improve their confidence and extend their learning capabilities beyond what they can learn alone."





OUR PROGRAMMES: *an overview*

The range of programmes and services offered by English Language Partners reflects a change in the needs of migrants and refugees in New Zealand.

Janie Walker & Dorothy Thwaite

While they are also a response to changes in government strategies and funding, each and every programme was born from a desire, through teaching English, to help welcome, connect and meet the needs of the people who create such wonderful and colourful threads in our Kiwi society.

In 2009, the organisation delivered 11,746 services to adult learners in 23 locations around New Zealand. These services were delivered by 3,164 volunteers, as well as hundreds of paid tutors working in specialised programmes.

The diversity of the organisation's programmes has come out of the success of any true partnership – shared decision making.

In its own way, each programme helps migrants and refugees resettle and develop their new lives in Aotearoa by offering English-language support in a partnership between tutor and learner.

The new programmes have greatly strengthened the organisation's capacity to deliver quality services. They have also strengthened English Language Partners' capacity for change.

Read more about seven of our diverse programmes:

Community English Groups

- Began in the 1990s
- Social, community-based groups to practise English and share experiences
- For refugees and migrants with a range of language abilities
- Led by an experienced paid tutor, often supported by trained volunteers
- Weekly, for approximately two hours, usually during school terms
- A small cost may apply in some centres
- Available in all centres
- 4,529 learners participated in 2009

Community English Groups

“For many there’s no other real contact than these groups.”

Most learners in these groups are relative newcomers to New Zealand. For many, these groups are the only real contact they have outside their own communities.

Although all groups are part-time, they differ hugely in structure and content. The common aim of groups is to encourage learner confidence and settlement through social interaction – using English. Tutors respond to the needs of the group, which differ from one locality to the next.

Common topics include essentials like shopping and making medical appointments independently. Often the outside community comes to the group with visits from local business or other community groups such as Plunket, ambulance and Civil Defence services. All groups go on outings several times a year, to places ranging from the supermarket to the local police station. Groups are often held in community centres: familiar local landmarks where learners get to hear about community fairs, tai chi classes and the like – ways to get further involved in the community.

An important aspect of these groups is the way learners pull together and help each other. They often try to learn a few words of each others' languages and share information. The tutors are the first to admit that they too learn from this sharing of experience and expertise. ☺

ESOL Home Tutoring

- Began in the 1970s
- Individually tailored, English-language support with a home tutor which includes learning about New Zealand culture
- For migrants and refugees. Some centres prioritise learners
- Volunteer tutors undergo training on the Association's NZQA-approved, 60-hour training course
- Approximately one hour each week in the learner's home
- Free service
- Available in all centres
- 3,819 learners participated in 2009



“It’s about settlement through language. And the learner’s home is a very strong place for that.”

ESOL Home Tutoring

This volunteer-based programme, the first developed by English Language Partners, is supported by a 60-hour, NZQA-approved training course. The training kit received special recognition for excellence from UNESCO in 1997, and has recently undergone a full revision.

These learners are often at the beginning of their settlement journey. The programme, with its partnership approach, allows them to bring their knowledge and cultural experience to the learning process.

One of the initial questions learners are asked is: “What could you do in your country that you can’t now?” This provides a starting point for both learner and tutor for their journey together.

The work achieved is closely linked to the practical challenges of everyday living: it is also very individual. Like all the organisation’s programmes, there is no text book. However access to expert staff and well-stocked centre libraries ensure tutors are resourced.

Learners may be assisted to study for a taxi licence, to interact with their children’s teacher, or to learn about the options around childbirth: it’s about learning English to settle in.

With more than 3,000 trained volunteers, the programme continues to be a strength and point of difference for the organisation. ✨

English for Employees (E4E)

“It’s a second welcome to New Zealand. It says ‘you are here and we want you to develop your skills’.”

This programme is for migrants already in work. It helps build confidence in English, numeracy and literacy, and allows people to work towards promotion and furthering their careers. Each group caters for individual needs.

The programme’s small group structure allows some groups to focus on language used in specific workplaces – like taxi driving and hospitality. Learners also gain a more in-depth appreciation of ‘Kiwi workplace’ culture.

One of the strengths of this programme is the spirit of cooperation amongst participants and the support they show each other.

The programme is of particular interest to those who are employed but are looking for more meaningful employment where they can use their skills and training. It has been referred to as a ‘second welcome’ to migrants. ✨ See the feature story on page 12 and meet four recent programme participants.

English for Employees (E4E)

- Began in 2009
- A course for small groups to help improve workplace language, literacy and numeracy
- For permanent residents who are working (full-time, part-time, self-employed)
- Tutors have a combination of TESOL and teaching / literacy educator qualifications. Many have experience in workplace and/or adult literacy. They also undergo specialised training by the Association.
- Part-time, at times and venues to suit learners: usually two-three hours weekly for 10-12 weeks
- Free service
- Available in all centres
- 767 learners participated in 2009

ESOL-Literacy

This programme was piloted in West Auckland in 2001 with members of the Ethiopian community.

Classes are for learners who have had access to little, if any, formal schooling in their own countries. Some can write a few words in their own language but because many come from oral cultures, their way of life has not been through literacy. Others, due to conflict in their home countries, have had no opportunity to learn to read or write. Many have survived trauma and may have spent years in refugee camps before coming to New Zealand.

These learners face huge challenges in adapting to the expectations of formal study in our highly-literate society; in reorganising their ideas to fit the conventions of written text and in dealing with the structure of English, which has 'more exceptions than rules'.

One of the keys to success of these classes is the bilingual (often multi-lingual) assistants who take part. Many learners find it easier and less stressful to work with a bilingual assistant who knows what it is like to learn English, and who can provide understanding as well as positive role modelling.

The programme is an integral part of our obligation to ensure for refugees an equal opportunity to become independent, contributing members of society. Attending these classes is often the first step for refugees towards more formal learning opportunities. ✎



English 100 (E100)

- Began in 2010
- A new programme for learners to improve their language, literacy and numeracy
- For permanent residents
- Teachers have a combination of teaching and ESOL qualifications. Many have experience as adult literacy educators. Both teachers and bilingual assistants undergo a specialised training programme run by the Association.
- 100 hours of intensive learning over 5-20 weeks
- Free service
- Available in southern South Island centres
- 132 learners will participate in 2010

"If I can write my own name, then I can sign my own WINZ form. And if I can read a map, I can go to an ATM on my own without relying on my daughter."



ESOL-Literacy

- Began in 2002
- A structured, weekly class for learners who do not read and write well in their first language
- Mainly for refugees
- Teachers have a combination of teaching and ESOL qualifications. Many have experience as adult literacy educators. Both teachers and bilingual assistants undergo a specialised training programme run by the Association.
- Approximately eight-ten hours per week for 38-40 weeks
- Free service
- Available in seven centres
- 461 learners participated in 2009

English 100 (E100)

"These learners see New Zealand as a place to spend the rest of their lives. They are here to learn."

This new programme delivers on government strategies around increasing numeracy and literacy. It is currently in its first term and feedback so far is positive. This intensive, 100-hour course can be completed between five weeks and 20 weeks, depending on the time commitments of the learners. Because this course is intensive, the expectation is that each learner will make positive, quantifiable progress.

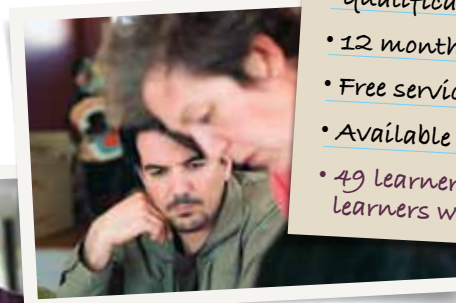
Learners make progress in the context of their own personal, social and professional environments. ✎

Get Ahead Start

“If you don’t have the language, you’re excluded.”

In partnership with the Open Polytechnic, this new foundation programme offers self-paced study supported by resources and a trained coach. Learners have contact with their coach every week as they work independently on the workbooks and resources in their student packs.

The programme is great news for learners who want the independence to manage their own study and work at their own pace. Because of the independent nature of this course, the support of English Language Partners is critical to keep learners on track. Feedback so far reveals that learners are enjoying having their own resources, as well as the support of their coaches. ☺



Get Ahead Start

- Began in late 2009
- A level 1, distance-learning programme offered by the Open Polytechnic and supported by English Language Partners. Learners achieve a formal New Zealand qualification (OP 1001 Certificate in Foundation Studies)
- For permanent residents to improve their literacy, numeracy, computing, problem solving and communication strategies
- Trained coaches and assessors support the learner-paced programme. Assessors have adult educator training and an assessor qualification
- 12 months of distance study
- Free service
- Available in northern North Island centres
- 49 learners participated in 2009; 150 learners will participate in 2010

English for Migrants (EfM)

- Began in 2000
- The only one-to-one, home-based service for migrants via Immigration New Zealand’s prepaid English language prerequisites
- For permanent residents of New Zealand
- Teachers are experienced and have a professional TESOL qualification
- Usually two-three hours, once or twice a week
- Prepaid tuition service
- Available in most centres
- 130 learner contracts were completed in 2009

English for Migrants (EfM)

“How can we assist you to make your way?”

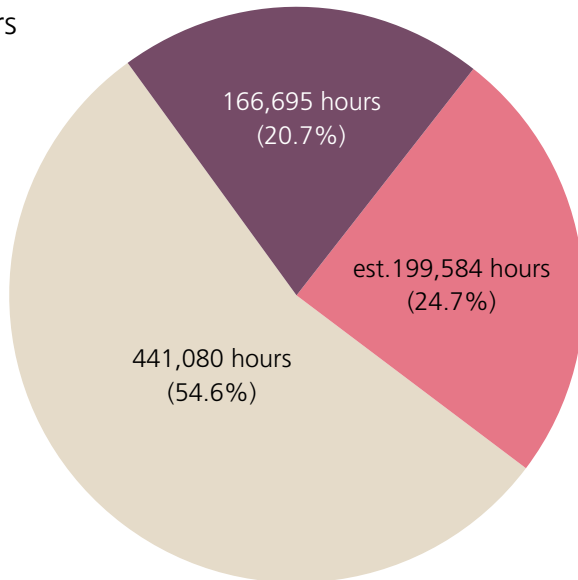
This intensive course is one option for migrants who, as part of their admission to New Zealand, have prepaid for English language tuition. English Language Partners is the only organisation to offer one-to-one, home-based learning to these migrants.

Many of these learners were professionals in their own countries and are comfortable with formal study. Some choose to take up one-to-one tuition because they live in rural or isolated areas, others are unable to attend classes at an institution because they care for children or run their own business.




The programme is entirely learner-focused: contracts of between 26 to 50 hours are undertaken by learner and teacher and tuition may be intensive or spread out over six months. Like the one-to-one ESOL home tutoring programme, the friendships between learners and tutors often last well beyond the formal contract. ☺

English Language Partners – hours of provision by teacher type

Total hours
807,359¹



Teacher type

-  **Trained and experienced teacher (paid)**
Community English Groups, Get Ahead Start
-  **Trained ESOL home tutor (volunteer)²**
ESOL Home Tutoring
-  **Specialist TESOL and literacy qualified teacher (paid)**
English for Employees, ESOL-Literacy, English 100, English for Migrants

1. Provision volumes are based on 2009 data
2. NZQA-approved, Level 3, Certificate in ESOL Home Tutoring



Network news

Full house for ‘language buffet’

Over 70 people packed into English Language Partners’ Palmerston North centre on 21 February, International Mother Language Day. Learners gave language lessons in Chinese, Russian and Arabic, with brief tasters of Cantonese, Malay, Japanese, Tagalog, Bhutanese, Burmese and Dutch.



Listener features Kayan learners

The *New Zealand Listener’s* February 20 issue featured an article on Nelson’s Kayan refugee community, and highlighted the educational needs of refugees.

English Language Partners’ CEO Claire Szabó commented on New Zealand’s responsibilities to ensure refugees settled well – poignant in the light of the Government’s decision to cut refugee study grants.



English for employees

On the surface, English Language Partners' new course, English for Employees, meets the government's objective of raising literacy in the workforce. However, on a deeper level, it offers migrants and refugees a vital 'second welcome' to New Zealand.

Meet four individuals who attended the first round of courses in 2009. The opportunity to develop their futures for themselves and their families has been paramount to settling in Aotearoa. Janie Walker

Catching on to the Kiwi lingo

When Laura Agüero Cendak first started work in New Zealand she was invited to bring a plate to a 'barbie'. Initially she thought "why on earth would they want to play with dolls, and what are we going to do with plates?" The idiosyncrasies about the Kiwi workplace, mainly around language, baffled her. "Kiwis talk so fast and I wasn't familiar with their expressions. People were accepting of me, but it was very hard. I thought I would be a Kiwi in just a year. It takes a long time."

Laura met her Kiwi boyfriend, Symond, here in New Zealand while on holiday. They soon realised it was serious, and in 2007 she ventured across the world from her home country, Argentina, and began her journey of settlement. After various temporary jobs, she now works at the Embassy of Argentina, in Wellington.

There aren't many opportunities for Laura to extend her English at work,

Workplace language matters

What makes a family – Mum, Dad and three children – pack up their lives in Taiwan and move to Hamilton, New Zealand? Alison Robertson

In Melissa Hsu and James Lin's case it was education and lifestyle. But it was still a big and brave decision to leave well-paid and successful careers to move Down Under.

"We had been to New Zealand before; I did a BA in Japanese at Auckland University many years ago in 1994 and James had visited too," says Melissa. She met James in Taiwan

when they were both studying their masters degrees. Melissa worked in international trade. "I'd travelled a lot in my job – including Canada, USA, Russia, Italy, Germany, France and Japan – but we chose New Zealand as a place where we'd like to educate our children and retire."

"I couldn't retire immediately, I knew I'd have to find a job," says James, an

electronics engineer. "But when we arrived in December 2006, I suddenly realised Kiwi English was different from American English," says James. "Its stress, tone, pronunciation and wording. It was upsetting to find how little I understood and how hard it could be to make myself understood."

In Taiwan, James had worked for

so she knew she had to do something outside of her work environment if she wanted to improve her English. She also needed to widen her social circles in order to feel less withdrawn. Through the Latin American women's group, Mujeres in Aotearoa, she came into contact with the Multicultural Services Centre. They, in turn, connected her to the English for Employees course.

She saw the course as a second welcome, "It says you are here and we want you to develop your skills; you are not just here to clean our toilets and our kitchens.

"If you feel like you belong, you start to be proud of New Zealand, even though you are from somewhere else. You start to want what's best for New Zealand."

With her new-found confidence, she is now at Victoria University studying for her MA in International Relations. She knows it's going to be tough, but she's got her mind's eye set on being of real value to the Kiwi workforce. "I have a different background so my point of view is different. With problem solving I will bring different issues to the debate. It will enrich the whole team.



"If you feel like you belong, you start to be proud of New Zealand, even though you are from somewhere else. You start to want what's best for New Zealand."

"Look what I've done: I have travelled 10,000 kilometres to start a new life. If I can do that, I can do anything."

Laura is now even starting to dream in English. "It means I'm going through the process of real learning. I'm proud of being an Argentinean, and an immigrant, but this is my home now."

Being able to talk to an English-speaking person with confidence means she has the opportunities to not only develop herself, but to really help others. After all, isn't that the Kiwi way? ✨

global companies: Hewlett Packard, Agilent and Philips, holding down several leadership roles. He'd used English to communicate with colleagues offshore, but usually through writing and reading.

Finding the Waikato Migrant Resource Centre on the Internet started what James calls his "amazing English learning journey in New Zealand".

The contact with English Language Partners not only helped the couple improve their English, it opened up new social networks. They joined a Community English Group, completed a Migrant Work Placement programme with English Language

Partners and James studied Business English at the Waikato Institute of Education. In 2009 they started on the English for Employees programme.

James first took on part-time labouring jobs. He got back into engineering through door knocking. It took six months, but he finally secured an interview for a technician position in the Sterile Services Unit at Waikato Hospital. English Language Partners' tutors helped him shape his CV and even attended the interview with him. James got the job and six months later, with help from English Language Partners' coordinator ▶

Network news

Local festival ideal spot

On 7 March, the Newtown Festival in Wellington proved the ideal place for the Wellington centre to profile their services. A crowd of at least 60,000 people visited the festival this year.



International flair on parade

On 21 March, Whangarei held an international costume parade to celebrate Race Relations Day. Music and dance featured as representatives from 24 nationalities entertained an audience of more than 200. The event was organised by staff at Whangarei Central Library with English Language Partners Northland, Whangarei Migrant Centre and Settlement Support all participating.



Overcoming the nerves to speak

Serving up delicious meals at Little India restaurant in Wellington is something Shrinand feels amply confident about. He has 20 years of cooking experience, but lacked the skills to speak English to waiting staff and delivery people. Completing the English for Employees course has given him a new-found confidence.

In India, Shrinand worked for a four-star hotel, heading up a staff of eight in a specialist curry department. He

very much enjoys the variety of work in New Zealand, where chefs do everything from chopping to cooking.

Shrinand speaks mainly Hindi to the cooking staff, so learning English outside of work has been an integral part of developing his career.

The content of his course was tailored for people working in restaurants, which made learning together relevant and fun. And yes, he has already recommended it to his colleagues. "Of course! It is good for other people to do too."

Shrinand works six days a week and came along to the course on his one day off. Even so, he never missed a session. "My English is better than before," says Shrinand. "My vocabulary is much wider now, and I am not so nervous to speak to people."

It's a long way from the north of India to the North Island of New Zealand. His family are still in India and he has managed to go back three or four times in the eight years he's been here. It sometimes means returning to the middle of a New Zealand winter, but he likes the culture here. "The money is good. And it is clean, and friendly." ❀



Contributing to global education

Linda Lam's biggest problem used to be feeling confident enough to use email. Now it's wondering why computers always seem to go wrong when you're busy.

She runs her own company, New Zealand Connections, which assists Chinese students to study in New Zealand high schools and universities and to live in home-stay environments. Thanks to being part of the English for Employees course run by the Hutt centre last year, and finishing a computer course at the Lower Hutt Women's Centre, Linda can now confidently reply to emails – now part of her daily life.

To excel in her business, Linda needs to keep upskilling, especially when it comes to communication.

"We all live in a global village, and education plays an important part. People have always accepted my 'Chinglish' but the improvement in my English over the past year has amazed even me."

Linda enjoyed learning in a group, and focusing on work-related communication issues. If something new came up during the week, she could bring it to class without being afraid of sounding stupid. Sharing stories was also a valuable part of the course.

► Diana Hummel, he got a job as a biomedical engineering technician. He is responsible for keeping all those sophisticated medical devices found in hospitals working properly and safely.

"Having good English in my job is crucial to patient safety," says James. "I must be able to communicate and understand verbal and written instructions. It's also important to understand the protocols, standards and regulations of each medical device well to ensure current practices and procedures and patient safety are followed." The job's going well and his links with English Language Partners continue.

Across town, while James was going out to work, Melissa took on more study. She knew there was a big demand for early childhood teachers and decided to study online for a Graduate Diploma of Education (Early Childhood) through Waikato University.

"That was intensive and demanding, probably more so for me because of my English, and I studied ten hours a day, six days a week." On her third and final practicum Melissa was offered a permanent position at Paddingtons Early Childhood Centre and is still working there while their three children attend high school.





“My English is better than before, my vocabulary is much wider now, and I am not so nervous to speak to people.”

“One of my classmates had to work in a takeaway shop because her English wasn’t good. The more she learns the less she’ll need the government for assistance.”

She says that it’s all very well for the government to accept immigrants into New Zealand, but they need to take responsibility for what happens after that. “Especially women: some have babies when they are very young and can’t educate themselves or learn new skills.”

Today Linda’s company is contributing productively to the New Zealand economy. ✨

English as a matter of survival

On the window sill in Mehari Gebrzgiher Hagos’ lounge is the 69-page Transport Service Licence Handbook. Mehari is determined to pass his taxi driver owner-licence test, so he can better provide for his family.

Mehari arrived in New Zealand in 2003 as a refugee from Sudan, and is originally from Eritrea. He recognised early on that he needed to study English after his arrival in order to be able to support his wife and six children. “But it’s harder to study when you’re older,” says Mehari. “After six months of being here the children could all speak English. Now they correct me.”

The English for Employees course offered by English Language Partners Wellington meant regular contact

with others in the same situation, so he felt comfortable enough to try out his spoken English. The course assessment tasks the group worked on meant he could gauge his success, and he found the teaching very good. Mehari also received additional one-on-one support through his ESOL home tutor.

In Sudan, Mehari was a painting contractor. He’s hoping to do more of that work here too. “In Africa it is so hot that we used different kinds of paint. And our houses are brick, rock, and concrete. Here they are wood and the paint is oil-based and shiny. I need to learn these things.

“And I get letters all the time from Housing New Zealand, or my children’s school, or letters about me and my wife. I have to read these and understand them so I can reply. I can do this better now after the course.” ✨



He recognised early on that he needed to continue to study English after his arrival in order to be able to support his wife and six children.

James and Melissa are great advocates for the English for Employees programme.

Diana Hummel coordinates the programme in Hamilton. She says it’s a flexible programme that covers the many and varied situations workers are likely to come across. “We cover general workplace matters but also focus on specifics. The classes are small so we can deal with issues one on one, though we often find what’s raised has relevance to other people in the class.” Generally, the sessions are two hours long and run for 12 to 13 weeks.

James and Melissa have enrolled for a second course. “The timing is good – they hold them straight after work – and they don’t just cover formal workplace issues,” says James. “We’re learning to communicate the Kiwi way, we learn different ways to question, we’re learning listening comprehension, and informal and formal styles of communication. I’d encourage all migrants who are in a job to do it.”

In the little spare time they have, James and Melissa have found interests that they wouldn’t have done had they stayed in Taiwan. With a gully section, James Lin (Lin means

forest) has been familiarising himself with the sounds of native birds and identifying native trees, and in three years has planted over 120 trees on his section as part of Hamilton’s Gully Restoration Programme. The family has also discovered tramping.

“I think when you move to a new country you have to be patient, brave and never give up; things aren’t necessarily right or wrong, just different,” says James. “It takes time to learn and adapt.” ✨

THE IMPORTANCE of immigration

Hon. Dr Jonathon Coleman, Minister of Immigration

It's hard to ignore the importance of immigration to a small country like New Zealand. Immigration is vital to the functioning of our economy and our future national development. Migrants make up more than 25 per cent of our workforce, bringing investment, skills and international connections that grow our economy.

A recent study into the economic impacts of immigration by the Department of Labour estimated that migrants over recent history have added around \$1.9 billion annually to the New Zealand economy.

Without migration, New Zealand would be unable to maintain its population or fill skill shortages, even in a time of economic slowdown. The Department of Labour study looks not just at current impacts but, more tellingly, what the future would look like if we ended immigration tomorrow. The results are striking.

Without current levels of inward migration, the growth of our population base and economy would be held back, with negative consequences for all New Zealanders. By 2021, if the tap was turned off tomorrow:

- our population would be 9.6 per cent lower;
- our GDP would be 11.3 per cent lower;
- our available labour force would be 10.9 per cent smaller;
- export sector volumes would be 12.9 per cent less than they would have been.



Hon. Dr Jonathon Coleman

The recent global economic downturn has led people to question whether this should trigger a change in how we should be looking at immigration.

With jobs in short supply, New Zealanders must be prioritised, but we also need to look further ahead to ensure that businesses continue to have access to the skills they need. We want to give immigration a longer-term outlook, with a real focus on maximising the value immigration has to offer New Zealand. I am currently exploring these issues with a view to placing a more strategic focus on immigration.

However, I acknowledge that, for immigration to be successful, migrants often require support through the settlement phase. I would like to acknowledge the wonderful role English Language Partners plays in ensuring our migrants and refugees are supported through the settlement

process. Settling in a new country, even when you do speak English, can still be a challenge, and it's important that migrants who come to New Zealand with the skills that our economy needs can settle quickly.

While settlement involves a whole-of-government approach, the contribution that non-government agencies such as English Language Partners make to welcoming and supporting new migrants and refugees is an important part of the mix. The Settlement Support New Zealand initiative demonstrates how this collaborative approach works through local settlement networks and delivery of a frontline referral service in 18 locations throughout New Zealand.

The Government is committed to strengthening settlement services through robust evaluation. As we set new priorities for New Zealand's future, it is pleasing to note the recent broadening of English Language Partners' service delivery, from its home and community-based tutoring focus to offering English courses in the workplace.

Settlement is a two-way process that ultimately involves all of us – whilst new migrants have to make adjustments as they build a new life in a new land; we also need to make adjustments to living and working with people from other countries. The English Language Partners' large volunteer base plays a valuable role in connecting new migrants to our New Zealand values and way of life. ✨

WORKING TOGETHER

Partnerships with learners *and* learner communities

Maria Park, Chair, Ethnic Advisory Group



Maria Park

Partnership projects

English Language Partners offers a number of free, English language services to migrants and refugees. The Get Ahead Start programme, which runs in partnership with the Open Polytechnic, opened towards the end of 2009 and initially involved 49 learners. This year it's anticipated that 150 learners will participate through a number of centres.

The organisation's new programmes are an opportunity for learners who are employed or seeking to do further studies. They are a clear sign that our organisation is on the right track in furthering successful partnerships.

Association initiatives

The new English 100 (E100) programme has started this year in four South Island centres. This initiative will increase the variety of programmes offered by English Language Partners.

Despite limited funding, English Language Partners is working hard to support Community English Groups in a sustainable way.

Ethnic Advisory Group (EAG) activities

The EAG added their non-English speaking background perspective to the recent Organisational Review. The Review also gave the EAG an excellent opportunity to review its own role and structure and to consider future responsibilities.

EAG member Khadra Mohamed's research on partnerships with learners and learner communities proved enormously beneficial to the Organisational Review. Khadra has also been elected to Refugee Services' Board.

Community initiatives

The Ethnic Advisory Group is pleased to see initiatives by the Somali community, with the Somali Research Network Trust launching the Somali Graduate Journal in December last year. The Trust is also starting to work on profiling unskilled workers' contribution to the economy in the unskilled labour market. ♪

Network news

Settling In report launched

On 26 March, the 'Settling In Albany Migrant Social Services' report was launched at Massey University by Hon. Tariana Turia, Associate Minister of Social Development and Employment. Guest speakers were North Shore Mayor Andrew Williams, Race Relations Commissioner Joris de Bres and MSD Manager Community Relationships Ann Dysart. Organisations participating in the report were presented with certificates from the Human Rights Commission.



Poster celebrates mother languages

To mark International Mother Language Day, 21 February, English Language Partners New Zealand created a poster with the phrases "Your mother tongue is a treasure – Use it every day". The message is in 17 languages. The organisation distributed the poster to community groups and language centres throughout New Zealand.



CHINESE ELDERS *motivated to learn*

After a career in social work in London's East End, Judith Shinegold was looking for new challenges when she retired to join her daughters in Auckland in 2009. Patricia Thompson

Mrs Zhaozhi Huang, a former professor of mechanics from China had settled in Torbay and had recognised the need for a specialist English-language class for Chinese senior citizens.

Together, Mrs Huang and English Language Partners' tutor Judith Shinegold are the driving force behind the Chinese elders' Community English Group, a hugely successful venture on the North Shore which is enabling older Chinese people to become more involved in Kiwi life.

The weekly group was started by Mrs Huang in 2007 with just a handful of members. Kiwi friends she had met through her granddaughter's school helped with the language teaching.

However, when they had to step down due to ill health, English Language Partners North Shore was asked to take over. Judith became a tutor with the group in July last year.

"I had enjoyed a career as social worker in the UK, largely with adolescents and most recently working with elderly Bangladeshi people in London's Mile End," says Judith.

"After moving to New Zealand, I heard that English Language Partners was looking for volunteers. I was familiar with ESOL from my work with Bangladeshi people so thought that would be ideal.

"I was training to be a home tutor and asked the manager at the North Shore centre, Birgit Grafarend-Watungwa, if I could sit in as an observer at a Community English Group. She suggested the Chinese elders' group, and I have been there ever since."

Since then the group has grown dramatically, with up to 55 people attending meetings. It now requires six tutors, so Jude Bergius, Ann O'Hara, Sue Fever and Norman Leng have joined the team. A bilingual



Members of the group celebrate Easter with tutor Jude Barrere
Left: Mrs Zhaozhi Huang and Judith Shinegold.

“It is an opportunity for people who are in a similar situation to get together, practise their English and learn more about New Zealand culture.”

Mandarin-speaking tutor, Yvonne (Guey Chau) Lee, has also joined the group, specifically to teach in the beginners' class and help with translations.

“When I first became involved there were about 20 members, all Chinese elders but it has just grown and grown,” says Judith.

“People range in age from their late sixties to eighties. Some have been in New Zealand for years and others might have arrived the previous week. We now have Cambodian and Korean members too.

“One of the main reasons people have not learnt to speak English is that they usually live with their children and grandchildren. Chinese is spoken in the home to ensure the grandchildren are bilingual so there is rarely an opportunity for older people to learn or to use English.”

Lessons are practical, aimed at helping learners to get to grips with language skills required for everyday life.

Judith draws up a lesson plan, based on ideas the group have suggested, and Mrs Huang translates it.

“Often it is things that most of us take for granted,” says Judith. “We have covered subjects such as colours, numbers and clothes. Recently, members asked us to make ‘using a telephone’ the subject of a lesson.

“The group is very well established and that is down to the efforts of Mrs Huang who is totally dedicated and a real driving force. The members are great and motivated and I really enjoy my involvement.

“What makes it so successful is that it is very social. It is an opportunity for people who are in a similar situation to get together, practise their English and learn more about New Zealand culture.

“People have made fantastic progress. At our end-of-year party one lady stood up and made a speech in English. That was something she certainly could not have done a year ago.” ✿

Network news

Ventures in the community

Working in partnership with local migrant service providers, English Language Partners Bay of Plenty ran language classes in their local Sikh temple. The Gurdwara temple, located in Te Puke, hosted three volunteer tutors. Tutors followed temple protocols by removing their shoes, wearing head scarves and sharing food.



International Volunteer Day

Celebrating International Volunteer Day in Auckland late last year, the four Auckland centres held a joint event acknowledging their volunteers' work for the organisation. Auckland Mayor John Banks spoke at the occasion, meeting with volunteers and awarding certificates.



Work with MIGRANTS & REFUGEES

Help with English language

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