

CONNECTING CULTURES

ISSUE 17 WINTER 2011



ENGLISH
LANGUAGE PARTNERS
NEW ZEALAND
Working with Migrants and Refugees

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60th anniversary

UN Convention
on Refugees

1951–2011

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Kia ora Welcome

Each year New Zealand is proud to welcome 750 quota refugees to our country as new citizens.

2011 marks 60 years of the United Nations Convention on Refugees.

A remarkable 6,567 refugee and 834 asylum seeker learners have accessed English Language Partners' services since records began in 1994.

Volunteers, generous with their time and skills, continue to make a significant contribution to the settlement experiences of these new Kiwis.

Last year 1,342 refugees from 23 different ethnicities accessed our organisation's services. We've taken an in-depth look at these refugee learners, and the result is "Focus on Refugee Learners", a special supplement to our annual report. There's more about this report in this magazine, and it's available on our website. Please contact us if you'd like a paper copy.



On 12 May Hon. Hekia Parata, Minister for Ethnic Affairs, hosted a parliamentary breakfast themed 'Refugees and migrants, succeeding, participating, contributing'.

The event provided an opportunity to hear from outstanding guest speakers Mitchell Pham and Doris Niyonsaba.

Arranged in partnership with English Language Partners and Refugee Services, members of both organisations attended, along with parliamentarians and government agency officials.

In follow up, Minister Parata has contributed her thoughts as 'Guest word' writer for this issue.

The association warmly welcomed Nicola Sutton, English Language Partners' new Chief Executive. On June 3, Claire Szabo, former Chief Executive, left to undertake a Masters in Public Administration at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. We wish her all the best for her future.

Grace Bassett
Editor

English Language Partners New Zealand

Who we are 280 staff and 3,000 volunteers working with 8,000 migrants and refugees in 23 New Zealand locations

What we do Provide a range of English language programmes and settlement support via a unique blend of professional teachers and trained volunteers

Where to find us www.englishlanguage.org.nz

Join us! Train as a volunteer home tutor

Happy to see others happy

For Kannha Mao, volunteering in New Zealand started at just 17 when she took part in a play for a Cambodian trust fundraising event.

Justine Storey / Photos by Antony Kitchener



“I like being one of those who can help. Even if you can’t put the money in yourself, you are one of the people in the back[ground] helping put money into the community.”

Kannha arrived from Cambodia in 1997 to help look after her grandparents, and the move also enabled her to study further.

Kannha remembers when she first arrived she didn’t speak English at all well. The hardest thing, initially, was understanding some of her Cambodian friends who spoke English nearly all the time.

A later challenge came in 2001, when she undertook a commerce degree at Victoria University – involving a whole new kind of English.

Kannha graduated in 2005, majoring in marketing and management.

But it wasn’t long after she arrived that her volunteering started.

“When I arrived, I feel like I love New Zealand. It helped me become quite independent, and I felt useful enough to be a full person and help others.”



Kannha took part in a number of performances for the Wellington-based Cambodian Trust and other community organisations.

In 2002 she joined the Khmer Wellington Association as the youngest-ever committee member.

She admits she was a little nervous that, at just 22 years old, she wouldn't be able to help as much as

some of the others, but she was a strong and determined woman who knew what she wanted.

Now she is the Art Coordinator and organises all performances for festivals and special events on behalf of the Khmer (Cambodian) community.

It's perhaps a little surprising Kannha is now in the position where she organises dance performance and

even teaches the group. Because although her mother was a dance teacher in Cambodia, Kannha didn't learn to dance until she came to New Zealand.

However, it was with the help of the videos her mother sent that Kannha taught herself to dance.

It has been her dancing that has opened many doors for her here. ▶



► Kannha's not sure where Zlata Sosa, English Language Partners' Wellington manager, heard about her, but when she contacted Kannha about dancing it was a meeting that would lead to a much bigger involvement in the organisation.

It was after Zlata Sosa asked Kannha to perform at one of English Language Partners' events that Kannha went to talk to her.

"When I dance for groups I don't ask a lot about the group, just about the performance. But I was working as an interpreter at the time and saw that English Language Partners' office was right next door to my work so I went in to find out what they did."

"I thought to myself: my English is not that good but I could maybe help teach simple English, so I asked Zlata how I could help."

I like to volunteer to see the smile, not the money.

Kannha completed the volunteer ESOL home tutor training course in 2009 and has been helping others learn English for two years now.

"I am so impressed with Kannha's enthusiasm and willingness to help others," said Zlata. "So I was delighted when Kannha offered to help as a volunteer".

"She knows from her own experience that learning a new language and settling in a new country can be a prolonged and emotional process. She has already worked with three learners!"

This year, Kannha is helping even more by joining English Language Partners' committee.

"Kannha is a unique, compassionate young woman. She brings her ethnic community connections and views. She also has experience participating in fundraising events for Wellington's Cambodian community. Her knowledge will be of benefit to our centre too," said Zlata.

Kannha is not one to turn down a chance to help other people and so she is also still dancing and working on the Khmer Wellington Association committee.

"Volunteering is my hobby, it gives me pleasure. I'm happy to see other people happy so I like to volunteer to see the smile, not the money."

Fresh eyes on Kiwi refugees

Kiwis abroad know learning a little of the local language can make daily life easier. However, for many refugees it's an essential step in the process of rebuilding their lives in a new country.

English Language Partners has taken a closer look at refugees learning English after they arrive in New Zealand.

'Focus on Refugee Learners' provides a rare insight into where and how refugees learn English here," says Chief Executive Nicola Sutton. "There are over 23 refugee ethnic groups learning English with our organisation."

English Language Partners has been a major fixture on the landscape of refugee resettlement for over 35 years. In 2010 they worked with over 7,900 learners, of whom 1,342 were refugees.

"While refugee support is a long-established central plank of the organisation, several factors make this the perfect time to report on our refugee activities," says Nicola.

The government is currently developing New Zealand's Refugee Resettlement Strategy in collaboration with non-government organisations. 'Focus on Refugee Learners' will inform to the Ministry of Education's work around refugee access to English language services.

Refugee organisations have also articulated the need for clear information about the services available.

"Government doesn't purchase English language services specifically for refugees, and how funding is spent

can be elusive [to the public]. We're giving communities information about the services we're proud to provide for refugees," says Nicola.

2011 also marks the 60th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on Refugees.

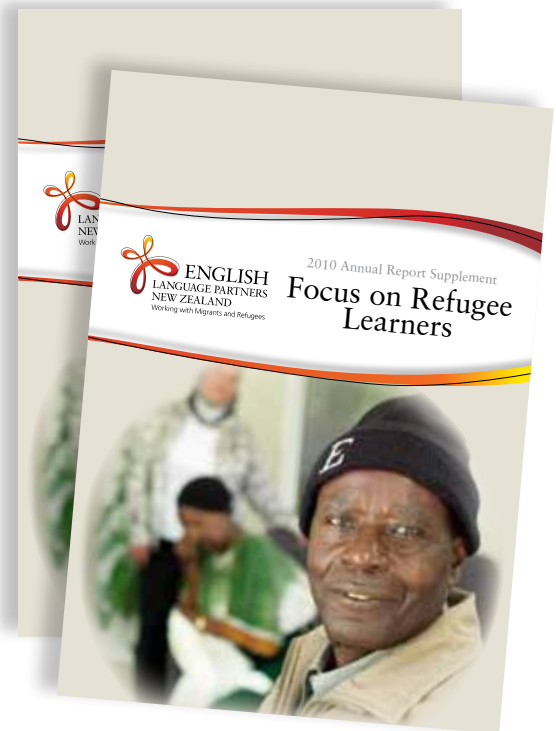
"Without doubt, the timing is appropriate. At the heart of our work is a desire to advance a relationship with our learner communities based on partnership, accountability and taking responsibility for successful outcomes," says Nicola.

In 2010, the organisation invested \$1.4 million in services for refugee learners, equating to just over 33% of total programme funding.

Burmese learners (313) were the largest refugee ethnic group followed by Afghans (162), Somalis (113) and Cambodians (91). Other major groups included Ethiopian, Lhotsampan, Iraqi and Columbian learners.

Of English Language Partners' 22 centres, the Auckland centres had the highest number of refugee learners (487), followed by Wellington (211) and Christchurch (145).

When comparing refugees to non-refugee learners, the Nelson centre, had the largest percentage, with more than half their learners refugees (54%).



The report revealed a quarter of all English Language Partners' refugee learners were 'preliterate' (not literate in their own language). A further 42% were literate in their own language, but beginners in English.

Fifty per cent work with a volunteer tutor in their homes for one-to-two hours a week. "However, they often need more provision, as refugees typically have low levels of English and may have missed out on mainstream schooling," says Nicola.

The specialist ESOL-Literacy programme, designed to help preliterate learners, was last year accessed by 44% of refugees opting to learn English through the organisation's group learning programmes.

With continued high levels of migration and static funding levels, clarity around organisational priorities is vital.

"Effective service delivery is key in tough times, says Nicola, "By drawing down on our experience, we believe we can improve our own work and offer something valuable to others."

The report is supplementary to English Language Partners' annual report and is available on www.englishlanguage.org.nz



Chief Executive *inspired by volunteering*

One sure-fire way of getting to know an organisation is to experience every role.

Nicola Sutton, new Chief Executive of English Language Partners New Zealand, has worked in a multitude of positions during her 18-year involvement.

"I see the Chief Executive role as a continuation of my work as a champion for the rights of migrants and refugees to learn English," says Nicola.

From a grassroots beginning as a volunteer in Auckland, Nicola quickly developed a passion for working with migrants and refugees.

"Helping newcomers settle in well is at the heart of English Language Partners' work. I was determined to learn everything I could about how the organisation functions.

Nicola has worked as a resource librarian, a finance manager, has

taught learners with very low English literacy and was also a centre coordinator in Christchurch for two years.

From 2002 to 2007 she took the helm as Chair of English Language Partners' national Board.

Nicola joined the national office as Operations Manager in 2008, before becoming Deputy Chief Executive in 2010.

Born in Reefton to parents who moved frequently around the country, Nicola attended 10 schools in 10 years.

"Although I had fluent English, the process of settling into a new community and school required courage and built resilience, something many migrants and refugees have in abundance.

"Our strategy is focused on increasing migrants' and refugees' involvement in English Language Partners, and on partnering with like-minded organisations. I look forward to draw-

ing on the enormous skill base of migrant and refugee communities so we continue to respond innovatively.

"The challenge of working to create opportunities for people who are new to the country, new to the way we do things here, is immensely exciting."

Charles Berridge, English Language Partners' Chair, says: "The Board is delighted Nicola accepted the Chief Executive role. She stood out clearly as top candidate among the excellent applicants. Her understanding of the operating environment, outstanding commitment to the mission and ability to generate new strategic thinking is highly valued."

Nicola took up the Chief Executive position on 6 June. 🌟



Settling for less? *No way*

Kwok Fong and his wife chose to immigrate for the opportunity to live in a less hectic environment with better air quality. Mary Atkinson

Schools here also provided their three children with a high standard of education within a more relaxed environment.

The Fong family came from Hong Kong in 2003. Kwok arrived as a highly-qualified and experienced senior engineer, able to read and write reports in English.

Kwok sees himself as luckier than most because he was able to get a job within three months. However, he believes his communication problems have prevented him from getting a higher paid job with staff responsibilities, such as he had previously.

In Hong Kong, Kwok worked as a senior engineer in the refrigeration

field. Since arriving, he has been working as an air-conditioning technician.

Kwok feels employers tend to hire people they know rather than those with the best qualifications.

This situation is especially problematic for immigrants, he explains, because they are no longer in the same ▶



NZ HEARLD/MICHELLE HYSLOP

Talking with his neighbours helped him to pick up the local slang.

► country as previous colleagues, employers and clients and have not had time to form a wide circle of local acquaintances.

Recently, he handed in his notice, and is now excited about setting up in business for himself. Kwok believes he has at last built up enough experience and made enough contacts for this to be a viable prospect.

After realising what a problem his lack of conversational English was, Kwok began actively looking for ways to improve his language. He now believes one of the best ways to achieve this is to join in with the neighbourhood community and to engage others in conversation.

Talking with his neighbours helped him to pick up the local slang and to feel welcome here. Kwok has formed

friends with people from different nationalities and has been touched by kind offers to clear his mail or bring in his bins while the family is away.

An advertisement in a local newspaper drew Kwok's attention to English Language Partners' English for Employees programme held at Howick Library.

Keen for any opportunity to learn, Kwok responded to the ad and was put on a waiting list. Six months later he was given a place.

The lesson format surprised him because he had not realised they would be so focussed around the learners' own goals. He deliberately chose small, realistic goals that could be achieved within the programme's 25 weeks.

While he was able to meet some goals within that time, he still had much to learn and was pleased when he was then offered a place in another course.

For Kwok, a positive aspect of life in New Zealand is the number of volunteers helping in the community. He believes volunteer work is a great way for new migrants to gain relevant experience and build networking contacts while also helping others.

Kwok tells his eighteen-year-old son he would be wise to consider volunteering opportunities and to enjoy the happiness this work brings to others. ✂

Claire Szabó *heads to Harvard*



English Language Partners wishes
Claire all the best for her future studies



In early June, former Chief Executive, Claire Szabó left English Language Partners to undertake a Masters in Public Administration at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

Claire joined the organisation in 2005, taking up the Chief Executive position in 2006.

During her five-year term as Chief Executive, Claire increased funding for new programme delivery, rebranded the 22 member organisations and launched a new strategic plan to unanimous approval. She was also a founding member of several sector alliances.

“I have been honoured to lead an organisation with such a clear commitment to migrants and refugees.”

In July 2010, Claire was recognised as Central Region Young Executive of the Year and, in December, she went on to win the NZIM/Eagle Technology Young Executive of the Year supreme award.

English Language Partners ‘whanau’ farewell took place on 14 May at a special evening event held during the association’s annual conference.

“I’ll be watching with interest as this amazing organisation goes from strength to strength.”



Joining in

Dr John Benseman recently took on the challenge of unpacking this part of English Language Partners' vision. Dorothy Thwaite, ESOL Programmes Manager, English Language Partners

It wasn't a totally new challenge; John has worked on several projects with English Language Partners over the past 12 months, and presented some of his work at the organisation's May conference .

John describes the aim of the report as "cracking open the third part of the vision to find out what it really means" .

The topic sounds a bit of a mouthful, but it is the essential philosophy underlying the organisation's work with migrants and refugees. It sums up the social justice aspect of the work. It complements the work teaching English and meeting learning goals.

A social barometer

There is a good deal of specialist language, and even more research, on the meaning of civic participation (or active citizenship, or social integration).

When the opportunity and access into New Zealand life come easily, we can take social participation for granted.

Everyday examples include: engaging in worship of our choice, taking part in education, voting in local or national elections, participating in the workforce; attending a school Board of Trustees meeting, responding to a survey on local bus timetables and phoning the electricity company to discuss better rates.

Participation helps to build trust, confidence and general well-being of communities and the wider society; important for social stability. In general, the higher the participation rate the lower the isolation, and the better communities function.

"It's a bit like a barometer of a society", says John. "You can see it in the way strangers approach one another – as potential friends until proved otherwise, or with suspicion?"

Barriers for migrants and refugees

In New Zealand and overseas, tutors are the first port of call as adults from non-English speaking backgrounds seek to participate. English is a key tool to access society – employment, health services, local clubs etc. New arrivals with little English are at a distinct disadvantage and can quickly be excluded from aspects of society.

Confidence in language use is top of the ‘must haves’ for successful participation, according to government departments and non-government organisations in New Zealand and elsewhere.

Other barriers for migrants and refugees include:

- a lack of resources – it costs to take an active part in society;
- social isolation – allocated housing may be a long way from public transport or the local library;
- insecurity about housing or legal status;
- difficulty in gaining entry into the workforce – paid, and equally importantly, the voluntary workforce;
- a lack of understanding on both sides – new migrants are unfamiliar with how things work; our host community is not familiar (and sometimes not patient) with differences or diversity.

Out of the classroom into society

The report outlines two main approaches to adult education.

‘Learner as an individual’

The first approach is based solely on the needs and wants expressed by learners. (“I need to get a part time job near my home.” “I don’t need to know about the geography of New Zealand”). This is fully learner centred, but excludes opportunities and topics the learner may be unaware of.

‘Learner as a member of society’

A second approach includes knowledge and skills that are part of adult rights and responsibilities (the transport laws, tax obligations, the electoral roll, New Zealand’s regional parks).

This approach is not totally learner centred, but provides the learner with knowledge and skills outside their current world view or experience. The learner may use them, or not – they have the choice.

Our way of doing things

English Language Partners probably includes both approaches. The content of English Language Partners’ first home-grown curriculum included recommendations from the learners, from both learners and teachers, and from teachers only. Other frameworks have followed a similar pattern.

However, learners and tutors are the decision makers about what English is learned, and ESOL tuition varies across regions, localities and from home to home: a case of embracing diversity (rather than following a prescribed curriculum).

Necessary diversity, since the ‘rules’ for civic participation vary across different groups and localities.

The Auckland way of doing things is not always valued in other parts of New Zealand. City dwellers participate differently from those living in rural areas. As John says, “It’s like trying to play a game called ‘New Zealand life’ where you don’t know the rules”. Some of the rules are obvious. Others are not so apparent.

The challenge is to provide the language, support and environment that allow migrants to have that same choice.

Where to?

As in so many cases, this research raises more questions. But it also provides evidence that English Language Partners is on the right track, and that there is a strong link between what we do and what we aspire to in our vision statement.

The report can be viewed on www.englishlanguage.org.nz



John Benseman has been involved in adult literacy and learning for over 33 years. He worked initially as a tutor and programme administrator and then spent 13 years at The University of Auckland teaching about adult literacy and learning. However his greatest involvement in the sector has been in literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) research and evaluation, including major projects for the Ministry of Education and the Department of Labour over the past decade to inform national policy and funding. John has also been involved with UNESCO and OECD projects, co-authored two books and written numerous reports and journal articles on adult literacy.

<http://www.linkedin.com/pub/john-benseman/23/2b2/589>

DIVERSITY

benefits society

Guest word: Hon. Hekia Parata, Minister for Ethnic Affairs.

New Zealand today looks very different to the New Zealand of 50 years ago.

Today New Zealand is one of the most diverse countries in the world, with nearly one in four New Zealanders born overseas.

We need to capitalise that diversity for the benefit of all New Zealanders.

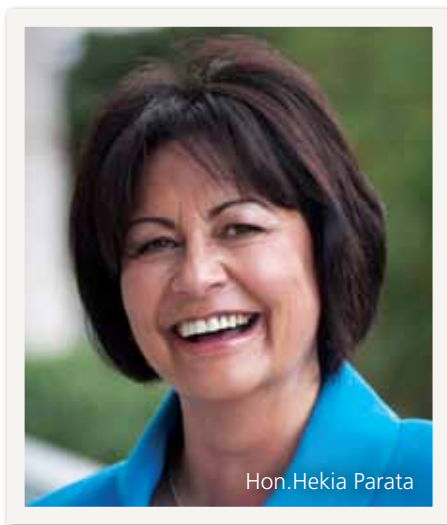
Like the rest of the world, New Zealand is feeling the strain of the global financial crisis.

We have also had to contend with the collapse of finance companies, blizzards in Southland, drought in Northland, PSA in the Kiwifruit industry, the costs of leaky homes and schools, loss of life in the Pike River mine and the two devastating earthquakes in Canterbury.

Therefore, it is more important than ever we make the most of our ethnic communities' talents, skills and connections to generate greater employment opportunities and boost our economy.

It is estimated that migrants contribute around \$3 billion per annum to New Zealand's economy.

When migrants settle in New Zealand they bring with them a wealth of skills, qualifications and commercial knowledge. This level of knowledge and expertise can bring valued international connections, investment and business success to New Zealand's economy.



Hon.Hekia Parata

It can increase our markets, stimulate innovation and lift productivity. In turn our export, tourism and educational markets experience increased growth.

The Office of Ethnic Affairs is working hard to maximise ethnic people's multinational connections. Through business forums and surveys they have identified target areas to concentrate on in the coming years.

Participants in last year's ASEAN Business Leader Forum spoke about their difficulties in being able to connect with mainstream businesses. As a result, Cabinet has approved funding for a database which will help bridge this gap.

Coupled with this is the increasing realisation that good business sense in an increasingly globalised world includes a workforce that embraces and manages diversity.

I came to Parliament after a long career working in both the public and private sectors where the benefits of diversity in the workplace were evident.

As Minister for Ethnic Affairs and Women's Affairs I have been actively promoting this.

International research shows a positive correlation between women in leadership and corporate performance. This includes a study of Fortune 500 companies – the biggest businesses in the US – which shows that the companies with the most women directors are significantly more profitable than those with few or no women directors.

Diversity benefits every level of society – the individual, community and economy because of better decision-making, problem-solving and innovation.

As part of our New Zealand way of life we want excellent schools, high quality health services, a visible and available police force, roads, broadband, clean water, and support when we are least able to support ourselves.

Our Government understands that successful integration for migrants and refugees into New Zealand's society is a win-win situation, as it provides a safe and harmonious environment for the individual coming here, and allows the country to benefit from their skills, knowledge and their international connections.

Network news



Parliamentary breakfast

On 12 May Hon. Hekia Parata, Minister for Ethnic Affairs, hosted the parliamentary breakfast: 'Refugees and migrants, succeeding, participating, contributing'. Guest speakers Mitchell Pham and Doris Niyonsaba shared their experiences before and after arrival in New Zealand.

English Language Partners and Refugee Services arranged the event, and members of both organisations attended, along with parliamentarians and government agency officials.



Left: Claire Szabo, former CE, English Language Partners; Nicola Sutton, CE, English Language Partners; Heather Hayden, CE, Refugee Services; Mitchell Pham, Young Global Leader, World Economic Forum 2011; Doris Niyonsaba, Financial Manager, Refugee Services.



We are committed to empowering migrants and refugees to participate in all aspects of life in New Zealand.

world and OECD surveys routinely place New Zealand as one of the most peaceful countries in the world.

By being part of your community and by engaging with public agencies you and your community are contributing to New Zealand.

We want to ensure that ethnic communities in New Zealand are strong and self reliant and that their diverse expertise and knowledge is celebrated and utilised by the wider New Zealand society. ✂



With this in mind, we are committed to empowering migrants and refugees to participate in all aspects of life in New Zealand.

We are well on the way to getting there. A recent study by Victoria University shows New Zealand is one of the most welcoming countries in the

Totally engaged

Aware she doesn't have as much life experience as some, Jenny recognises she still has plenty to offer. Mary Atkinson



At just 18, Jenny Zhang is already into her second year as an English Language Partners' volunteer.

She moved from China aged four, and has seen up-close the problems her parents encountered learning a new language and understanding Kiwi culture.

Jenny acquired English with the ease of a young child; however, learning French at school helped her understand how adults learn languages and how languages are constructed.

Volunteer tutoring seemed a good match for her skills. She trained in early 2010 with the North Shore centre, and although younger than most trainees, she still felt very much a part of the group.

Jenny still sees her first learner regularly in spite of now having to travel across town for lessons. Her learner

is a young Burundian woman named Perpetue. She says Perpetue is enthusiastic and prepares in advance with lots of ideas for topics. She describes Perpetue as friendly, motivated and positive, words that could easily apply to Jenny herself.

Both Jenny and Perpetue are now first-year university students. Because they are going through the same experiences, it is easy for Jenny to understand what Perpetue is dealing with and to tailor their tutoring sessions.

While the focus of their lessons last year was mainly on everyday communication, this year it is on student life.

Jenny says their lessons are fun and easy-going; which may not have been the case with an older learner.

The pair have developed a flexible system – happy to arrange lessons around important events such as assignment due dates.

Their lessons often have a technological focus. Jenny taught Perpetue to use Facebook and Yahoo Messenger as well as other networking systems that allow Perpetue to connect with fellow students and other young people. She also helped her access useful on-line dictionaries, bus timetables and Google Maps.

To Jenny, participation means experiencing something new, while also offering something. She believes a small effort can make a huge difference to another.

Aware of how volunteer work, such as being an English Language Partners' tutor, is a big responsibility, Jenny thinks people shouldn't take on roles without being prepared to make a commitment. While many New Zealanders have positive attitudes towards volunteer work, she feels they don't always put them into action.



Jenny speaking at "Celebrating 20,000 volunteers", Auckland, 5 December 2010

It's important some of her time is devoted to assisting others. This year, even her part-time job as a student facilitator for SavY, an organisation that teaches school students basic financial skills, involves helping people.

Last year was Jenny's final year at school, and no one could have accused her of kicking back and not participating in school life.

As well as her academic studies and sporting and music commitments, she was also a co-leader of the school's Human Rights Group, the student representative on the Board of Trustees, and a representative of Carmel College at Youth Parliament 2010.

This was on top of volunteering for IHC and English Language Partners.

This year, Jenny is a student of law, philosophy and politics. Currently at the University of Auckland, in

August she will move to New Jersey to continue her studies at Princeton University.

Jenny has told Perpetue who, understandably, is disappointed their lessons will come to an end. She views Jenny as a friend as well as a tutor, and will miss her support.

Jenny is quick to point out that even though she has an opportunity too good to refuse, she will remain in regular contact with Perpetue.

The two plan to keep in contact with emails, text messages and Skype video-phone conversations – continuing to share their learning experiences. ✂

Network news



Christchurch's new home

Christchurch centre was first red, then yellow stickered following the February earthquake. Staff have relocated to their new home and are slowly getting used to 'the new kind of normal'.



Centre celebrates new citizens

Taupo celebrated Race Relations Day at a citizenship ceremony. Learners put on morning tea at Taupo District Council, sharing with the Mayor, councillors, and other new citizens and friends.



Having come so far *to become so close*

New Zealand life began with the combined 40 hours' air travel of Paw Ka Paw and Bella Gamboa. Bill Harrison

Their journey now centres on easing each other through smaller steps. Each step feeding into larger and more long-term goals.

Together as learner and tutor since 2009, this English Language Partners' duo create sessions reaching beyond simply acquiring new language, and into the shared inspiration of each others' personal challenges.

Bella, tutor, explains: "We want Paw's new English to eventually help her through shopping trips and public transport to church".

The victories shared by Paw and Bella include Bella's daughter, Robella (17), debuting in a Miss Philippines-New Zealand beauty pageant. Another recent cause for celebration was Bella gaining permanent residency; another positive step in the resettlement process.

Paw arrived as a refugee in 2007. She and her family had escaped Myanmar's dictatorship by boat, to then spend more than a decade in a Thai refugee camp. In Myanmar she was a rice and chilli farmer, and her working day began at 3am.

Paw and her husband, Ka Kwel Plo, are the parents of two adult sons, Taw Naw and Pla Soe. A third, Hero, is still in the Thai camp waiting to rejoin his family in New Zealand.

Ka Kwel Plo is partnered with Sly Watungwa. Originally from Zimbabwe,



She trusts their sessions together are useful to Paw, who simply responds: "God bless Bella."

Sly trained as a home tutor with English Language Partners North Shore in 2010. Ka Kwel Plo is developing his sentence structure by creating his own sentences from reading introduced by Sly. Sly aims at this former farmer becoming "a local resident who can really get about by himself".

Bella, also mother to older son Toby (20), arrived in 2007. She relinquished her twin professions of special needs teaching and office work in Cebu, the Philippines' second largest city.

She now works for Creative Abilities and Associates, and her current responsibilities include supervising 11 community workers based in

a residential home with four high-needs residents.

It's a challenge fitting in her voluntary home tutor work with Paw, but Bella finds it rewarding, believing the learning goes both ways.

Paw is inadvertently drawing out more teaching skills than Bella believed she had. "Being with Paw has also encouraged my own word power to explain things more easily," says Bella, "and always with fun and variety!"

She trusts their sessions together are useful to Paw, who simply responds: "God bless Bella." ✨

Celebrating New Zealand's many ways to say 'hello'

Always wanted to say 'hello' to a migrant friend,
workmate or neighbour in their own language?

English Language Partners and Community Languages Association of New Zealand (CLANZ) joined hands to help Kiwis do just that.

This year, the two organisations created a poster and bookmark with greetings in 29 languages, including English, Māori and NZ Sign. UNESCO, the Human Rights Commission and the Council of Trade Unions supported the initiative.

"CLANZ was inspired, as we were, to acknowledge the number of languages Kiwis can converse in," says Grace Bassett, Profile and Publications Coordinator at English Language Partners.

Communities, schools and workplaces displayed the poster on UNESCO's International Mother Language Day (21 February), to encourage people to have a go at saying 'hello' in one of New Zealand's many languages.

"While mother languages are mainly spoken in the home, UNESCO's day is a chance to show off our increasing cultural diversity," says Sunita Narayan, President of CLANZ. "It's an excellent opportunity to highlight how we, as Kiwis, can expand our social and economic connections globally."



While the original idea was celebrating International Mother Language Day, the posters are proving to have a life of their own, and are still popular with schools and workplaces.

Copies are available by contacting natoffice@englishlanguage.org.nz.

Network news

Conference 2011

Conference, May 14-15, was an opportune time for catching up with members from around the country. This year's theme was 'Perspectives on Participation'. For presentation notes: www.englishlanguage.org.nz



Japanese earthquake inspires Taupo into action

Taupo took their fundraising to the street in an effort to raise money to help victims of the Japanese earthquake and tsunami.



Whanganui moves

On Tuesday 31 May Mayor, Annette Main, welcomed members to the Whanganui centre's new home.



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