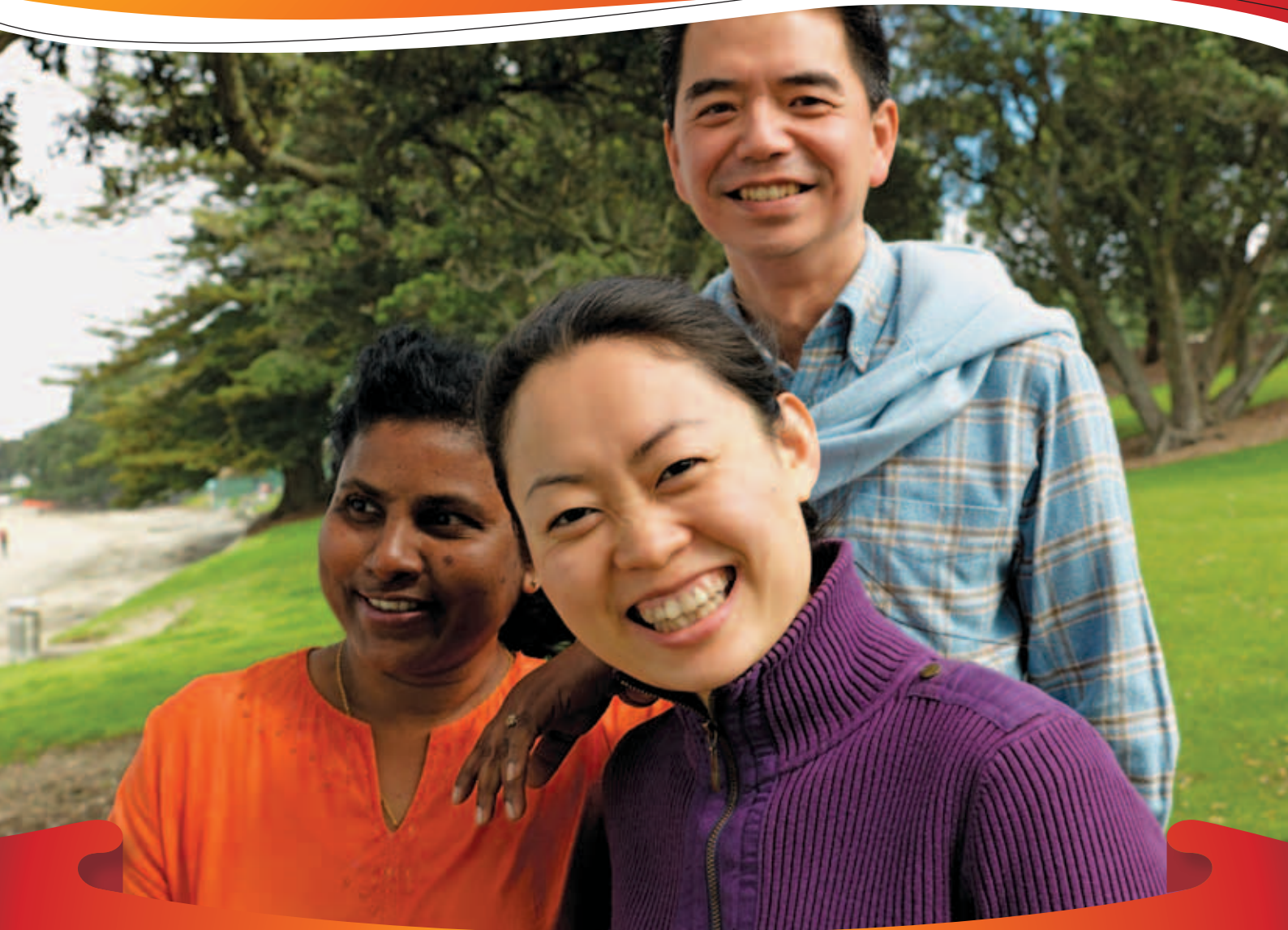


CONNECTING CULTURES

ISSUE 19 SPRING 2012



Celebrating 20 Years

AS A NATIONAL ASSOCIATION



ENGLISH
LANGUAGE PARTNERS
NEW ZEALAND

Working with Migrants and Refugees

www.englishlanguage.org.nz



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Design and production Paradigm

Cover North Shore learners
Photo Jane Ussher

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Vision That migrants and refugees have the opportunity to learn English, to pursue aspirations for themselves and their families, and to participate in all aspects of life in Aotearoa New Zealand

Mission To provide English language skills and social support for the effective resettlement of adult refugees and migrants in Aotearoa New Zealand

Kia ora Welcome

We're celebrating 20 years as a national association this year. I'd like to thank all our dedicated English Language Partners' volunteers and learners who have spent many hours learning together, and our hardworking staff members who have been a special part of our organisation over the past 20 years.

Our service, however, has been running for much longer than 20 years – nearly 40, in fact, as our ESOL home tutoring programme began in the late 1970s in a number of towns and cities throughout New Zealand.

From humble beginnings! In the mid-1990s around 1,500 volunteers worked in the homes of just over 2,000 learners. Today, we have over 3,000 volunteers and 280 teaching and coordinating staff delivering five distinctly different national programmes to over 7,500 learners.

In this Connecting Cultures, we look back at the stories of two remarkable members: Larissa Mastakova, a former learner who joined us in 2000, and Denise Lawrence, an exceptional tutor who has now been volunteering for nearly 20 years.



I thank Hon. Nathan Guy, Minister of Immigration, for contributing his thoughts on improving outcomes for migrants and refugees resettling in New Zealand.

Employment is a key indicator of successful settlement, and I'm delighted this issue includes an article on Auckland-based company, Freshmax.

Working towards English highlights how improving English skills can lead to better outcomes in the workplace. In the words of Vivienne Power, general manager of distribution: "The confidence we are seeing from our team is, to say the least,

amazing, and very productive."

Nicola Sutton
Chief Executive
English Language Partners New Zealand

English Language Partners New Zealand

We are 280 staff and 3,000 volunteers working with over 7,500 migrants and refugees in 23 New Zealand locations

We provide a range of English language programmes and settlement support via a unique blend of professional teachers and trained volunteers

Find us www.englishlanguage.org.nz

Join us! Train as a volunteer



Celebrating 20 years

PHOTO: MARK SMITH

Creating the vision

✦ National association forms

✦ *Just One Dollar* campaign
keeps association afloat



Many happy returns for unique Kiwi service

English Language Partners is celebrating its 20th year as a national body.

Samoa performers ensured a vibrant start to celebrations at the May conference, followed by a welcoming speech from Councillor Arthur Anae, Chair, Economic Forum, Auckland Council.

Founding Chief Executive, Judi Altinkaya recalled some of the early challenges, including the *Just One Dollar* campaign which carried the association through a difficult period.

A digital glimpse back over 20 years' highlights successes and the occasional humorous moment also featured.

Delegates received a decorative lapel pin featuring the striking ribbon component of the association's logo.

Digital clip/conference speeches:
<http://new.englishlanguage.org.nz/conference>



✦ Association distributes first bulk funding to centres

✦ *ESOL Home Tutoring* programme receives NZQA accreditation

✦ *Partners in Learning* training manual awarded UNESCO *Special Recognition for Excellence Award*

REFLECTIONS

13 years of giving her best

When Larissa Mastakova arrived from Russia, her home tutor, Annie Pratt, became her lifeline. Thirteen years on, they are still great friends.



Larissa Mastakova

Creating the vision

✦ *English for Migrants* programme begins

✦ *ESOL-Literacy* programme begins

✦ *Ethnic Advisory Group* begins

2000

2001

2002

Larissa's husband Victor had arrived a year earlier, but when she joined him, Larissa didn't know much about the country.

"It was only the stories my husband would tell me about the lifestyle and the very nice people, and that's it," she says. "When we were still in the airport, I was feeling like this was a paradise. Seriously, I was looking around and saying, 'Gosh, this is a paradise.'"

Larissa's grasp of English was limited. "I could probably say: 'Hi, my name is Larissa,' and that's all."

With Annie's help, settling in became a lot easier. "I was pleased we had a person leading us, showing us where to put our feet and not stumble; to stand up, go ahead and reach our goal.

"When we arrived, our daughter went to school and we didn't know about the schools at all. Annie was taking us to the school, talking to the teachers. I could not understand other people, but I could understand Annie. I couldn't reply to her, but I could understand her," Larissa says.

Annie says it helped to put herself in Larissa's place. "I realised how confusing it all was. New country, new cultures, and things to learn.

"Within a year she drove a car and had a job. Amazing! I had a very

bright 'pupil' so I was the one that had the easy ride," Annie says.

Larissa says lessons were centered on the language she needed. "We didn't have a particular plan that she would come and say, 'Now we're doing this and that, but we had 'What questions are there? What would you like to learn today?'

"Sometimes we would go shopping and she would teach me practically, saying 'What's this?'. We'd go to the supermarket and this was a different way of learning. You need to practise different ways," Larissa says.

"I had bad days too. Because sometimes I would try and say something but I would say, 'Sorry I'm tired,' so she would talk and I would listen. This was another way of communicating, of learning."

After a year, Larissa was asked to join her English Language Partners' centre committee, and found being the secretary a challenge.

"I still had problems with my spelling, and when I was offered this opportunity, it was quite a frightening experience," she says.

"They said, 'Look, just come and give it a try, we'll help you.' And yes, I was secretary for a year and a half!

"At the beginning it was quite tough, but when I knew what to write, I started getting more involved

“I was trying to pay them back for the help they gave us, our family.”

in discussions because in this way, I was improving my English.

"I was trying to pay them back for the help they gave us, our family," she explains.

Today, Larissa works in White Cross Healthcare's head office as Central Processing Unit Administrator, after starting as a receptionist there nine years ago.

She and Annie keep each other up to date about family news, catching up for coffee and meals when their busy schedules allow.

Larissa says Annie's been a great support. "Every problem we had and we still have, we first call Annie. We had this bond from the beginning.

"She is a wonderful friend, our New Zealand 'mother'".

Annie says Larissa has blossomed over the years. "She is always keen to better everything about her life and respect her 'new' country by giving her best." ✂

✂ VAVA* values association's volunteer work between \$5.1 – \$9.7 million

*Value added by Voluntary Agencies report by PriceWaterhouseCoopers

REFLECTIONS

A long association

In 1993, Denise Lawrence saw a sign in her library inviting people to help migrants with English language skills. She decided to give it a try.

Patricia Thompson



Denise Lawrence with one of her first home tutor learners

Little did Denise think that, nearly 20 years later she would still be volunteering.

“English Language Partners does an amazing job and long may it continue,” Denise says. “The organisation has always been welcoming and supportive and I have worked with some wonderful people.”

Denise, from Wellington, had recently been widowed, had three teenagers and was working full time as a secretary at Wellington Polytechnic when she began training.

“I was coming home from work and banging pots around and the children would grunt at me as teens do,” recalls Denise. “I decided I needed to do something two evenings a week, so they would have to learn to contribute to the household.

“I didn’t have the time or resources to study full time, I knew nothing about the organisation, but the training was part time over 10 weeks and free.

“I enjoyed the training and having some time to myself. Plus it was the best thing I could have done for my children as they each took turns to do things like get the washing in, prepare and cook our evening meal, making our family life better.”

Denise’s first learner was an Iraqi woman with two toddlers and she says the process was very much a learning experience for her too, getting to understand another culture.

Creating the vision

- ✦ Association rebrands as *English Language Partners*
- ✦ *English for Employees* programme begins

- ✦ 20,000 volunteers celebration
- ✦ Association funds *English Language Groups* teacher salaries

Denise's grandparents were Lebanese immigrants and throughout her childhood, Friday nights would be spent at their home, with all the family, eating delicious Lebanese food.

"I had also spent time on a kibbutz in Israel during my OE," says Denise. "But I didn't know much about other cultures."

Denise can't recall exactly how many people she has taught, but estimates about 16, including people from Iraq, Cambodia, India and Bosnia.

"I have enjoyed teaching all of them," she says. "I like to make up worksheet stories about them to help with their learning. I particularly remember one tiny Cambodian mother of two small children who wanted to train as an early childhood teacher.

"She was so determined and was studying for an English sixth form paper by correspondence.

"She had to study the poetry of Pam Ayres, and struggled to understand the unique humour. I couldn't stop laughing while trying to explain it, even trying it in a Pam Ayres accent. I believe she did pass her paper in the end."

“English Language Partners does an amazing job and long may it continue.”

Denise now works part time at a holistic health centre and, as well as ESOL Home Tutoring, helps with an English Language Group at a local community centre.

"I love the class," she says. "One of the ladies is a former learner from about five years ago.

"People have different levels of language skills so the teacher works with people who have more English

and I help those with limited skills.

"Quite a few are older Chinese people who have come here to help look after their grandchildren. As the children grow up and go to school they may not have patience with their grandparents not speaking English and they can feel quite isolated.

"They are lovely people and it's really special when they suddenly understand something you have said." ✂



Denise with a group learner

PHOTOS: ANTONY KITCHENER

✂ ELPNZ creates role to manage Auckland relationships

✂ 20 years celebration

Loving hands *weave colour* into reader

A former refugee, who along with her family, was forced to flee her home in Burma along jungle paths laid with mines is the subject of a new book.
Matt Lawrey, reprinted from the Nelson Mail

Mu Lar Pan, a member of the Kayan minority, spent eight days barefoot and on the run with her husband and small children after they escaped Burma's oppressive regime in the 1980s.

She then spent 15 years in a refugee camp in northern Thailand.

In 2009 she arrived in Nelson and a year later she joined a traditional weaving group called the Sukita Project set up by Dr Kay Sneddon to help keep the traditional art alive.

The early readers book *Mu Lar's Weaving*, written and featuring photographs by Maclean Barker, was the brainchild of Sue Heydon, who first met Mu Lar as an ESOL home tutor for English Language Partners and volunteer for Refugee Services.

"I remember seeing her sitting at her loom at one of our first lessons. I'm a weaver myself, and was delighted to meet someone with better skills – her work is so fine."

Impressed by Mu Lar's weaving skills, she enlisted Kay's help and Kay brought Maclean in to the project. Two years after Sue first had the idea, the book has been made a reality

thanks also to Dave Knight of Nimbus Advertising and Design who, like Maclean, worked on the project for free.

Mu Lar's book was launched at the Elma Turner Library in Nelson, on World Refugee Day.

A mother of eight, Mu Lar, 49, said through an interpreter that she was very happy with the book.

"I like it very much. I'm very happy when I weave and it's about my happiness," she said.

Mu Lar was taught to weave by her mother when she was ten years old and still weaves on a loom made by her father.

Maclean said she loved the idea of the book and thought working on it would be a great way to meet Mu Lar.

"She's got this wonderful unruffled grace about her," Maclean said.

Kay said she hopes the book will inspire other former refugees and migrants to introduce their arts and crafts to the communities where they live.

"Mu Lar and her weaving friends who have done that have made Nelson more colourful," she said.

“She’s got this wonderful unruffled grace about her.”

Sue said she had been overwhelmed by the way the Nelson community had supported the project.

"Really talented people have pulled together, for love, basically," she said.

"In the wider sense, I would love to get the book into primary schools. If, in any small way, it can help to support race unity or improve race relations: that would be wonderful. Mu Lar came with nothing, and look what she can do – she's a real inspiration." ✂

Mu Lar's Weaving is available from English Language Partners Nelson for \$15.00. Visit the Nelson centre's web page at www.englishlanguage.org.nz to order a copy.



Mu Lar's Weaving
Story and photos by [Name]



Working towards English

A free programme offering workplace English training is receiving rave reviews from employees and employers alike. James Fyfe

“Since starting the programme, my boys are a lot more out there,” says Rose Mauava, operations manager at Freshmax, a distribution warehouse in Auckland that accesses the *English for Employees* programme run by English Language Partners Auckland South.

“The biggest problem we had at the beginning was that they were scared to say anything to managers, but now they’re not.

“They’re not the shy, meek boys they were; they like to converse with people now and they are comfortable while doing it,” says Rose.

Two of “her boys” are workers Sione Mateaki and Pa Teaurai – who enjoyed their first 25-hour course module so much they signed up for the next module as well.

As part of the programme, employees, like Sione and Pa, come in to work two hours before their shift –

or stay two hours after – and receive an English lesson one day a week.

Free for both employees and employers, the programme is available to anyone who has permanent residency and is working in New Zealand and, as both Sione and Pa can attest to, it really is win-win for everyone involved.

Freshmax currently has two classes on the go, a beginners class, where learners, says teacher Betty Clyde, get “intensive care”, and an intermediate class, where learners learn work-related vocabulary and other vital skills such as filling in forms and how to converse on the telephone.

Dayshift manager Sione, from Tonga, says after taking the first 12-week module, he is now more confident speaking to people and interacting in his second language.

“Communication is the main thing for us,” he says. “Before I could

hardly communicate, but now I enjoy talking to people.”

And Vivienne Power, general manager of distribution, agrees.

“The confidence we are seeing from our team is, to say the least, amazing, and very productive” says Vivienne.

“English Language Partners have worked closely with us to tailor the programme to address health and safety in the workplace, and also ensuring when people signed their induction forms they understood what they were signing.

“This whole process has given the team the confidence to question things in the workplace that they are not sure of and see that things are followed through correctly.”

Vivienne says the extra confidence of her employees has also led to greater productivity.

"We thoroughly recommend this programme and we will be continuing with it as long as we can," she says.

Hoist driver and picker Pa Teaurai, originally from Rarotonga, says he finds himself greeting people more often and can see a marked improvement in his grammar and writing skills since he started the course.

"I have learnt to have conversations with my friends and workmates. When this class came along it really boosted my English and my knowledge," says Pa.

"It made me want to learn more so I can teach my kids English. I share my homework with them."

And for Betty, too, the improvements are obvious.

"I can see they are starting to think in English now, which they never used to do," she says.

Both Sione and Pa say their favourite part of the classes are the question and answer sessions, where they get to ask their classmates questions.

"They have to think of the questions themselves and they're not censored, they can ask anything. They don't have to answer of course," explains Betty, who says the question and answer sessions give learners the chance to get to know each other better, as well as allow her to check their grammar and monitor their overall progress.

"I'm observing who's joining in and who's not and who's prepared to think outside the square – and some of the answers they come up with are quite funny, they're quite the comedians," she says.

And their enthusiasm is rubbing off on other workers too.

"A lot of the boys that aren't on the ESOL class are wanting to do it now," says Rose, and Sione too says he is noticing that learners from the

beginners class are becoming more talkative and eager to practise their new language skills every chance they get.

"Before they never talk. They never say 'hi' and they never say 'bye'. And now, they get smart," he laughs.

But it doesn't stop there – the learners' newly found English is not just destined to remain in the workplace, more often than not it is taken home with them too.

"My wife is Samoan, and I can't speak her language and she can't speak my language so we have to speak English," says Sione who, like Pa, passes on his new language skills to his children.

"This English, they have never seen it before, it's not like their school English," he says.

And if the benefits in the household are anything like the benefits seen in the workplace, this programme is sure to remain as popular as ever. ✂

“It made me want to learn more so I can teach my kids English. I share my homework with them.”



Pa Teaurai, Betty Clyde (tutor) and Sione Mateaki





Becoming Kiwis

Sunita Mahat and Gulchehra Bawari shared a special experience – both became New Zealand citizens on the same day. Patricia Thompson

By coincidence, Sunita and her learner Gulchehra applied for citizenship on the same day, were granted it at the same time and invited to the same citizenship ceremony at Wellington Town Hall.

Sunita, who is originally from Nepal, learnt to speak English while living in Australia as a child while her father was studying forestry at university there.

“As a child I spoke English with an Australian accent,” says Sunita, who came to New Zealand to study in 1998 and returned to live in 2002.

Her childhood experience of living in Australia was one of the things that inspired Sunita, who works as a collections information officer at Te Papa, to train as an English Language Partners’ home tutor last year.

“I am often around people who have English as a second language and I remember that it was hard for my mother when we went to Australia and she could not speak much English,” she says.

“That was my motivation. It is important to understand what is going on in the country you are living in and to be understood. I found the training very good.”

Gulchehra is Sunita’s first learner. Originally from Afghanistan, she had lived in India for many years before coming to New Zealand five years ago. Although she spoke three languages, including Hindi, she had very little English when she arrived and found this quite isolating.

“When I first came to New Zealand my English was not good,” she says. “I remember I was at the bus stop and a lady talked to me and said ‘Oh, today is lovely weather’ but I didn’t know how to answer. Then I left the bus stop. After that, if I saw someone at the bus stop I would never go to the bus stop. At the moment my English is good.”

Now if I see someone at the bus stop I try to talk about the weather or Wellington.”

Gulchehra has taken a number of English classes and began lessons with Sunita last year. She says this has helped her in many ways, including learning to use Skype – so she now has regular conversations with her family in India.

“We meet once a week,” says Sunita. “I use various resources from the English Language Partners’ website and we talk about different things. In the summer we might do some reading about summer, gardening and recipes. Gulchehra loves gardening and cooking. She loves to do word puzzles too, so that is often her homework.”

Sunita is planning a trip to Nepal and she and Gulchehra hope to continue the lessons by Skype while she is away.

“Everything is easier now,” says Gulchehra. “I can go to the doctor’s or to the shops and talk to people. I feel confident to go everywhere in Wellington and I might go to Auckland soon.”

“Everything is easier now.”

Sunita made her citizenship application early this year, without knowing that Gulchehra and her husband had applied on the same day.

“Gulchehra mentioned she had an interview arranged and it turned out that my interview was on the same day, although with a different case officer,” says Sunita. “Then we found that our citizenship ceremony was on the same day in April, which was a very nice coincidence.”

Gulchehra wore a beautiful traditional Afghan costume for the ceremony, where Deputy Mayor Ian McKinnon presented them with their citizenship certificates.

“It was a lovely ceremony and the Deputy Mayor admired my costume and thanked me for wearing it,” says Gulchehra. “It was a special day. My husband Bawar and his sister Hafiza also became citizens that day, and it was lovely to share it with Sunita too.” ✂

Network news

New website

English Language Partners has redeveloped their website, making it easier for learners to navigate. The new site also features brief video clips about each major programme.



Manawatu radio stars

Palmerston North learners Od (Mongolia), Andrew (Hungary), Takako (Japan), Esther (Canada) and Angelika (Germany) visited *Access Manawatu* in August and recorded a lively radio programme. For some excellent teaching material, download the podcast: www.accessmanawatu.co.nz



Festival of Cultures

Whanganui’s annual *Festival of Cultures* on 22 September was a vibrant and colourful occasion, with the weather turning on a perfect spring day for the many participants.



Know your strengths

When Hardy Hko arrived from Burma, he quickly realised he needed to learn English to successfully start a new life. James Fyfe



That was 12 years ago. Today, Hardy not only speaks his adopted language with ease but, as a recent addition to English Language Partners' *ESOL Home Tutoring* programme, is helping others in the Burmese community too.

The key to both learning and teaching the language, he says, is self-confidence – something he works hard to instil in his learners.

Having studied English at university back in Burma, Hardy's Kiwi linguistic journey began with study at Auckland University of Technology (AUT), where the first step was making the most of written texts.

"Sometimes when the teacher spoke to me I couldn't understand, so the first thing I had to do was learn to read before they could teach me," he says.

"Because I had textbooks I could prepare. When I wanted to ask a question in class I had to write it down first and then practise at home by myself in front of the mirror and record my voice also, and then the next day I'd ask the teacher," he says.

"When the teacher understood me, it made me happy and was encouraging."

After mastering the essentials of the language, the next step was learning English in the workplace. Hardy got this opportunity with work experience organised by AUT that led to part-time work at a local business.

Once working, he enrolled in English Language Partners' *English for Employees* programme.

"I got a good chance to learn English [while working] because I had workmates and I asked them to teach me, and they were good Kiwis and happy to teach me. We would speak together at lunchtime and go to the shops together and after a year, my English had improved and we were having good conversations together," he says.

But Hardy recognises that not everybody can study fulltime or learn English at work. In his wife's case, it was North Shore's *ESOL Home Tutoring* programme that helped most.

"Some people do not have a chance to go to class; at that time my wife had a very young baby, my first born.

"She told me how much her English was improving, so I knew the value of the home tutor and can see it's necessary for new migrants or refugees."

When he was approached to become a tutor himself, Hardy was, despite being a little nervous, more than happy to give others the benefits he had seen his wife receive.

"I realised the value because my wife's tutor would do things like take her to the shopping centre, and my wife would tell me how happy she is and how her English has improved. So when Birgit [North Shore centre manager] told me she thought I could also be a home tutor, although I had doubts, I promised her I would do my best."

Manager Birgit Grafarend-Watungwa, who approached Hardy, says he has lived up to that promise.

"I worked with Hardy when he was vice-chair for the Karen Association. With Hardy, it's a true partnership, it's about how we can work together to better support his community," says Birgit.

"That's why I encouraged him to do the volunteer training himself. He's very committed, works hard at translating and is a great link to the community I would like to work with.

"He's an excellent spokesperson and a pretty incredible listener which helps, as he listens to the whole Burmese community," she says.

Hardy credits his own experience of learning and training for his success as a tutor.

"They do not just teach how to teach, they also teach us how to learn from the learner: about their culture, how to talk to them, what we notice, and what we have to take care of," he says.

Through teaching one evening a week at a local church, Hardy has identified reoccurring themes.

"What I did learn from them is they never have self confidence, and that's a big problem. But before I teach them I sit down and speak with them in our own language and I learn from them. I ask them why they want to learn English and I tell them 'know your strengths'".

As Hardy learns more, he has the opportunity to convey their views to English Language Partners through the national Ethnic Advisory Group (EAG) he serves on.

The EAG comprises representatives of different ethnic groups from all over New Zealand and meets four times a year to inform English Language Partners of issues to help its member communities thrive.

With people like Hardy, who know the importance of both listening and communicating so well, the Burmese Karen people can rest assured they are well represented. ✂

Network news

Shedding light on refugee learning

Adult refugee learners with limited literacy: needs and effective responses aims to help teachers working with this special group of adult learners.

Grant Robertson, Labour spokesperson, Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment, and Joris de Bres, Race Relations Commissioner, launched the research during *Adult Learners' Week* in Wellington. A summary brochure with teaching strategies is available from national office. Full research: www.englishlanguage.org.nz



Moon and Food Festival

English Language Partners' people numbered among the 20,000 festival goers. Pictured at the 22 September event are volunteer Larlina Parrone-Halpin, Mayor Len Brown, manager Estelle Swan and group tutor Robyn Martin. The festival was organised by Chinese New Settlers Services Trust.



“But before I teach them, I sit down and speak with them in our own language and I learn from them.”



Joy Sharp and
Lucila Orjuela de Gil

Quakes strengthen ties

Joy Sharp and Lucila Orjuela de Gil have a lot in common. Now they share a new bond. They've supported each other through Christchurch's killer quakes. Kim Triegaardt

It's hard to move to a new country when you don't speak the language. Throw a natural disaster into the mix and you would be forgiven for hunkering down and surrounding yourself with only the familiar.

Lucila however, is not one to let Canterbury's devastating earthquakes shake her spirit.

"I love New Zealand," she says. "It's quiet, the people are friendly."

Since the February 22 quake, much has changed for Lucila. One thing that's stayed constant, however, is her volunteer tutor, Joy Sharp.

The women have been friends since Joy began tutoring Lucila shortly after she arrived in Christchurch with her husband, William, from the

Colombian capital, Bogata, to join their three daughters.

They have much in common, says Joy, they like painting, have similar aged grown children and laugh at the same things. And since the quake they share something else; they both lost their homes.

"What was the quake like for you?" asks Joy. "It was horrible. I think only of my daughters who were in the city centre," says Lucila.

"It's alright," comforts Joy, stroking Lucila's arm.

Joy tried to contact Lucila after the quake, but it was two months before they found each other.

Joy's home was destroyed when it lost walls and part of the roof as the foundations subsided.

"We stayed with my son," says Joy, "then moved to Rangiora."

Lucila and William were given just one hour to pack and leave after inspections deemed their council flat unsafe.

Lucila's boss gave them space in his sleep out before the council found a new home for a couple of months.

Joy says that, despite the disruption, there was never any doubt that she would continue her tutoring. "Of course the priority was making sure our families were safe, but I wanted to reconnect and to help as much as I could."

Joy says the quake changed the focus of lessons. "We've talked quite a bit about our feelings around the quake – how terrifying it was, the sadness. It's really just about being supportive."

The help worked both ways. Joy says coming to Christchurch forced her to travel back into the city. "It would have been easy just to stay in Rangiora, but I wanted to come back and teach Lucila because we've always had such fun."

Both admit it was hard to get Lucila's learning back on track. Stress is known to trigger forgetfulness and Joy says they had to redo several months' worth of lessons.

"I forgot yes," laughs Lucila. "But Joy is good. I understand her."

Lucila was lucky to find a home close to where she works looking after two special needs children.

Joy and Lucila don't really talk much about the quake anymore, especially as there are always new things to focus on.

Lucila recently sent a number of canvases home to Colombia. Where once she painted flowers, she's now become a landscape artist and knows her family are envious of her new life, even after the earthquakes. "It is so beautiful here," says Lucila. "This is where I will stay." ✂

“We've talked quite a bit about our feelings around the quake – how terrifying it was, the sadness. It's really just about being supportive.”

Building a stronger New Zealand

Hon Nathan Guy – Minister of Immigration

As Minister, I want to increase the contribution immigration makes, by ensuring that we have the right people, skills and investment coming into the country.

A good example of this will be in Christchurch as the earthquake rebuild begins in earnest. Given the scale of this project, we will clearly need people from around the world with different skills.

Another major priority for me as Minister is to get better outcomes for refugees.

New Zealand is committed to being a good international citizen, and supporting those in need. We accept around 750 UN-mandated refugees every year.

We are currently working on a new Refugee Resettlement Strategy, which is a whole-of-government strategy. We want to support refugees to become self-sufficient and participate in communities, while reducing dependency on state support.

In May, I spoke to the National Refugee Resettlement Forum where two pieces of research were unveiled.

The Department of Labour's research indicates that employment is a key marker of integration for refugees.

Further research by ChangeMakers confirms that having a job contributes to self-esteem, the sense of making a contribution to society, and provides opportunities for people to build wider networks. The research also identifies that the barriers to work are consistent: lack of work experience, lack of English, lack



of New Zealand qualifications, and sadly, discrimination.

Employment is crucial to adapting to life in New Zealand. It offers a way for refugees to take part in New Zealand life, to connect with Kiwis, to up-skill and to improve their English. A job enables families to be independent, self-sufficient and to improve their lives.

All of this reinforces the value of the work done by English Language Partners' expert teaching staff and trained volunteers.

Thank you for the work you do teaching English in our communities. Your contribution helps people to find work, make friends and become part of New Zealand life.

In conclusion, I recently read about two young Burmese families who came to New Zealand in 2006 and 2007. They worked hard, saved and now own their own family home in Nelson.

It's an inspiration to all of us that refugees who start with so little can make such a determined effort to make a success of their new lives. ✨

Network news

Adult Learners' Week

200 learners and tutors celebrated at Auckland South centre's event. Su'a William Sio, MP for Mangere, presented certificates.



Tauranga centre's office administrator Nok (Napawan Williams) won an Outstanding Adult Learner award at the Tauranga Mayoral Awards.



Taupo centre members received awards for their learning. MP Louise Upston and Mayor Rick Cooper presented the awards.



The Porirua centre celebrated with a potluck dinner on 6 September.



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