

CONNECTING CULTURES

ISSUE 28 WINTER 2017



Congratulations
winners of our 2017 National Awards



English Language
Partners New Zealand
Awards



ENGLISH
LANGUAGE PARTNERS
NEW ZEALAND
Working with Refugees and Migrants

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Kia ora

New Zealand's largest organisation working with refugees and migrants.

Our programmes support diverse needs

Everyday English

- English Language Groups
- ESOL Literacy
- ESOL Intensive
- New Zealand Certificate in English Language
- ESOL Road Code for Refugees
- Local programmes

Work-focussed

- English for Employees
- Work Talk
- Police Recruit Literacy
- Job Mentoring

One-to-one

- ESOL Home Tutoring
- English for Migrants



Invercargill will shortly become New Zealand's sixth city to settle refugees. We're looking forward to working with the wider Invercargill community as they welcome our newest Kiwis.

Our Southland centre is gearing up to help those who are new to English, learn the language they need for work, study and daily life.

Our well-known ESOL Home Tutoring programme has been running for over 40 years. Over 20,000 Kiwis have donated their time and skills to help people learn the essential English they need to manage their lives and participate in everyday life.

Our recent review of this programme highlights its value, not only to the learners and volunteers who participate, but to Aotearoa as a whole. The benefits of building social cohesion and cultural understanding makes New Zealand a safer and more accepting country: where people understand each other better and share different customs and ideas.

The important work of our volunteers also helps ensure New Zealand benefits from the skills, knowledge, experience and connections that refugees and migrants bring with them.

The *Connecting Cultures* story 'Valuing the Kiwi connection' centres on this new research, which you can read in our website's research area.

Trong Nhan (Edward) Nguyen from Vietnam, is a fantastic volunteer profiled in *Connecting Cultures*. He's working in Palmerston North with Ranga Lal Magar, originally from Bhutan. Their partnership is typical of many across the country, and emphasises how both learners and volunteers, working together, are making an enormous contribution in their local communities.

I'd like to thank our many volunteers, teachers and staff for their work in helping to build more social inclusion in New Zealand.

Nicola Sutton

Chief Executive

Donate

Help refugees and migrants lead confident lives in Aotearoa.

3 easy ways

- 1 Mail us your donation slip (See inside back cover.)
- 2 Online at englishlanguage.org.nz
- 3 Call free on 0800 367 376

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GUEST WORD

Sun Lyoung Kim

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Please recycle *Connecting Cultures with family and friends before you recycle for the environment.*



A hand in a white glove gives a thumbs up gesture in front of a metal rack filled with rows of golden-brown croissants. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the hand and the bread.

Key ingredient *for a new career*

Teck Chai Liu (TC) and family arrived last year from Malaysia, drawn by our famous landscapes and quality of life.

Stevie Hight / Photos Michael Jeans

Now based in Hamilton, TC has hardly relaxed since he arrived. His wife, Valerie, an engineering consultant, had secured employment prior to arrival; she was the primary visa applicant. TC set out straight away to find a job too. However, as with many new job seekers, this proved challenging.

"When I first came, I was applying for jobs all the time, many jobs, and I wasn't getting any results."

Researching online for assistance, TC came across Settlement Centre Waikato. "I got into their networking session, and met Susan Wright from English Language Partners, who introduced me to the Work Talk programme." ▶

► “Work Talk talked realistically about the job market, how to prepare for it, how to do things differently, and it gave me new ammunition for my search.

“If you wait for a good job to land on your lap – it could take a long time, or would never happen. That’s the reality.

“All these things were clearly explained. If you want it, you need to go and get it. No shortcuts. They give you no sugar coating.”

TC decided to use the opportunities New Zealand offered for a career change. During his Work Talk time he was asked: if he could wave a magic wand and find the perfect job, what would it be? As he enjoyed baking, TC said he’d like to find work in this field.

“If you’re a new migrant who’s seriously applying for jobs, then Work Talk is a great place to begin.”

He was given details for a well-known local bakery, Volare. “So I wrote to them, and they gave me a trial. After Work Talk, when my trial was complete, they gave me a contract to start as a baker’s assistant. It’s a good start!

“If you’re a new migrant who’s seriously applying for jobs, then Work Talk is a great place to begin, because it gives you a good picture of the job market landscape. They tell you about ways to get noticed by prospective employers, and ways to sell yourself. You could be a very good employee, but if you don’t sell the right points, you’ll miss the opportunity.

“What makes Work Talk different, is that it’s very targeted in providing the right know-how to tackle the job market, and staying up-to-date with developments in employment trends.

“Typically, New Zealand employers and employees have this ‘team interaction’, small talk etc, so if you’re not ready for that, and expect to be a loner in your own cubicle, I’m not sure that’s going to work out for you.” TC laughs. “It’s all part and parcel of what the job environment is like.”

TC’s can-do attitude led him to volunteer with Atawhai Assisi Home and Hospital.

He was offered a role assisting the Cooking Club, but once he was working full time at the bakery, a new opportunity arose.

“I was very sad to tell the rest home I’d secured paid employment; I wasn’t sure I could come [to the Cooking Club] any more, and they said, ‘OK, we have a morning slot, for storytelling and singing. Are you interested?’ Oh yeah! I’ve been doing that for a couple of months; it’s really me.”

Recently, TC experienced a ‘money can’t buy’ moment. Many of the elderly residents suffer from dementia, and he’d noticed that they didn’t remember him from week to week.

“But the last session was really touching. Usually after each session, I farewell them, give them a handshake or a hug. This one lady gave me a hug and a kiss, and I was like, ‘Wow, you must remember me to do that!’ She didn’t act like I was a stranger any more, and that felt really good because I’m really connecting with them.”

TC’s supervisor Debbie Palmer speaks highly of his contribution. “He is such an asset, just gives his everything. He really is ‘one out of the bag.’”

TC acknowledges volunteering is a two-way thing. He gets a lot out of the experience too. “Job satisfaction is a great part of volunteering. Another plus is that you can add it to your CV. It gives future employers a different view of you.”





Teck Chai Liu (TC)
at the FreeFM
radio station



The list of TC's accomplishments doesn't end there. He'd been involved in producing a series of English language lessons for Chinese radio in Malaysia, and when the staff at Work Talk saw that reflected in his CV, they put him in touch with FreeFM, the local community access radio station.

TC's radio show reconnects people with their cultures through the medium of music. He picks a song each week, and teaches the words and how to sing along. It's a subject close to TC's heart.

"Now that my 12-year-old son Darius is living in a new country, he'll need to maintain and develop his Chinese language. If you have a language, skill or knowledge that is not used or practised on a regular basis, it will slowly disappear.

"Sharing songs in different languages raises awareness of this issue. It's a big part of my objective for this radio programme. Whatever listeners decide to do is a conscious choice. It gives me a great sense of achievement."

TC brims with energy and positivity, noting the differences in employment opportunities, as well as life experience in New Zealand. "Back in Kuala Lumpur, I'd reached that part of life where I didn't want to be in that rat-race any more; I wanted to live life, rather than just make a living."

He's certainly living a full life, and his efforts to join in with his community are admirable. TC sums up his approach: "As long as you have the hunger and drive, you can succeed." 🌱

TC Sings With U:

Live Sundays, 7pm on
FreeFM 89.0 (Waikato) and
Online player.wizz.co.nz/freefm89
Podcasts www.freefm.org.nz/freefm-on-demand

More on Work Talk:
www.englishlanguage.org.nz/work-talk



Moreen Shamoel at the Police Recruit Literacy graduation

Police Recruit Literacy Programme

This programme focuses on bringing learners to the reading and writing level required to join the New Zealand Police. The 18-week courses are offered in Auckland, Waikato and Wellington.

English Language Partners Wellington has had good success with the programme. This, says centre manager Zlata Sosa, is partly due to a strong relationship with the New Zealand Police.

“We have worked hard at this and it’s paying off,” says Zlata. “Having a guest presenter from the Police really inspires our learners.”

New country, new life

Like many refugees and migrants, Iraqi-born Moreen Shamoel has overcome some real struggles in her life, and now wants to use her own strength and experience to help others.
Janie Walker / Photos Janie Walker

“I really want to make a difference in other people’s lives, especially women,” says Moreen. “I want to tell them to be strong and stand up for themselves.”

When Moreen, first arrived in New Zealand, she could only speak two words of English – yes and no.

“I was very scared,” she says. “I had no friends or family support here. I was worried about being thought rude and I said ‘sorry’ a lot. Moreen found English Language Partners and began working with an ESOL home tutor one hour a week.

Moreen is a graduate of English Language Partners’ Police Recruit Literacy programme. It’s an enormous achievement for someone who arrived with no English.

Zlata knows every learner by name, and she knows their stories. At the graduation ceremony late last year, she shook each hand with pride. "It was such a beautiful thing," she says. "We are helping people achieve their dreams."

The New Zealand Police regard this programme highly because it helps them to engage with the changing face of New Zealand.

Senior Sergeant Kin Ip (Charles) from the Police has been hands-on with the programme. This includes getting students into the Police's volunteer ethnic patrol initiative.

"Our ethnic patrols build our capability because they help us understand this country's changing culture," Charles says.

"The definition of safety is different for everyone, depending on our experience, culture and how we see society. The benefits of having a diverse Police organisation better enables officers to connect with



Senior Sergeant Kin Ip (Charles) with Wellington graduates of the Police Recruit Literacy programme

everyone in this country, so that safety has the same meaning for all."

The desire to help make this country safer is a strong motivation for many participants. When Charles first introduced the volunteer ethnic patrol programme, everyone put their name forward. Charles says he was humbled by that.

"These people have full-time jobs, in one case, two jobs. Plus, they study

after hours and volunteer to do their bit for the community in other ways. It shows the best of humanity, that there are so many passionate people out there wanting to help." ✂

More about Police Recruit Literacy:
www.englishlanguage.org.nz/police-recruit-literacy

"I am now more outgoing and not afraid to speak my mind. There is no going back to how things were for me now. I want to tell other women that their lives can change too, that we are in a new country and rules apply."

Moreen is fluent in English, Arabic, Kurdish and Assyrian: she says that this will help her get her message out.

She also recently won an Outstanding Learning Achievement Award at English Language Partners' national awards.

Through her awards speech, Moreen spoke directly to other refugees and migrants. "I would like to say to each of you who come from many countries around the world and are learning English, don't give up. It can be done!

"I really want to make a difference in other people's lives."

"Not only did I have to learn a new language that was very different from mine, but I also had to learn a new way of writing. This would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of English Language Partners. They saw my potential and helped me reach the stage where I can proudly hold this award as a mark of my achievement."

Wellington centre manager Zlata Sosa says Moreen is hugely deserving of her award. "She's also a wonderful ambassador for English Language Partners, and has introduced others in the Assyrian community to our service.

Moreen currently has full-time employment with Work and Income New Zealand, and may one day pursue her dream of becoming New Zealand's first Iraqi trainee police-woman.

"She's such a resilient, strong and inspiring person," says Zlata. "I have no doubt that Moreen will achieve all her goals." ✂

Keep up with learner stories:
www.englishlanguage.org.nz/learners-stories



Congratulations to our 2017

English Language Partners recognised the commitment and dedication of learners and volunteers at our inaugural awards ceremony, held on 8 April at Te Papa.

The awards, presented by Sir Anand Satyanand, create a new opportunity to celebrate the achievements of refugee and migrant learners, their volunteer tutors, and others who make a huge contribution to the Trust's work.

Eleven winners were awarded under four categories: Distinguished Volunteer Service; Outstanding Learning Achievement; Premier; and Refugee Achievement, which carries a \$2,000 educational scholarship.

Refugee Achievement Award

Given to learners from refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds who have made exceptional learning gains and achievements with their English language.



Sandra Clavijo (Porirua)

Outstanding Learning Achievement Award

Given to individuals who have made exceptional gains and achievements through their work with English Language Partners.



Moreen Shamoel (Wellington)



Sebastiana Canales de Alvarez (Rotorua)



Rosa Fidela Munoz Alvarado (Waikato)

winners

Distinguished Volunteer Service Award

Given to volunteers who have made outstanding contributions in their work with refugees and migrants.



Denise Lawrence (Wellington)



Daphne Hutton (Waikato)



Robert Redmond (Auckland South)



Gretta Dymond (Porirua)



Carolyn Williamson (Southland)*

*Sadly, Carolyn passed away on 5 May 2017

Premier Award

This award recognises those who have made outstanding contributions to the work of ELPNZ, through their exceptional service or support at the local or national level.



Rhonda Lin



Gillian Skyrme



Sandra's *superb* achievement

One of the Clavijo family's first New Zealand destinations was their local library.

Patricia Thompson / Photos Patricia Thompson

The family has spent a lot of time at the library, working to improve their English.

So much so, that mum Sandra was recently named winner of the Refugee Achievement category at English Language Partners' inaugural awards.

The handsome plaque she received is now displayed proudly in their home at Tawa, near Porirua, while she has put the accompanying \$2,000 scholarship towards her continuing studies.

Sandra knew little English when she arrived in 2015, and initially failed the English entry test for Whitireia Polytechnic.

"We learnt very basic English at secondary school in Colombia, so I only spoke a few words," says Sandra.

"The Red Cross told us about English Language Partners. Our tutors have helped us so much. My ESOL home tutor, Howard Lukefahr, is a very good teacher. I also went to English Language Groups and studied at Tawa library in my spare time."

Sandra also undertook an English Language Partners' Intensive ESOL course.

When Simon Brown, English Language Group teacher at the Porirua centre, met Sandra, he was stunned at the level of English she had achieved for someone so new to the language; he was also impressed by her willingness to help classmates.

Manager Jacqs Wilton knew Sandra's hard work would pay off. "She has an enormous desire to make a success of her new life in New Zealand – for herself and her family – and she's working really hard to get her English where it needs to be."

Having passed the entry test at her second attempt, Sandra is now studying Level 3 English at Whitireia. After that, she will begin a foundation course in administration and computing with the aim of progressing through Levels 1 and 2.

At the same time, Sandra, husband Rodrigo and their three children, who lived as refugees in Ecuador for six years before coming to New Zealand, have put down firm roots in their local community.

Sitting in the family's home sipping Colombian coffee, Sandra admits she struggles with the Wellington winter. Daughter Camila, 18, and Rodrigo chip in with gentle teasing.

"Mum wears two jackets and a scarf," laughs Camila.

"And two pairs of gloves and two hats," adds Rodrigo.

Understandably, they miss family, and keep in close touch through Facebook and Whatsapp. They also miss being able to buy the strongest Colombian coffee, Plantain cooking bananas and bocadillo guava paste, as well as the South American sun, but say the benefits of living in New Zealand outweigh all this.

"We like New Zealand because it's very quiet and natural, and so safe for our children to play outside," says Sandra. "The people are very friendly."

Rodrigo, who has a degree in economics from Colombia and formerly worked in marketing science, is also studying English at Whitireia and planning to go on to study business at Massey University.

Hanging on the walls of their front room are intricate and brightly-painted carvings he has created since arriving.

"When I was a teenager, I had a part-time job at a workshop and was taught how to carve," he says. "When we came here, I thought it was something I could pick up again."

Camila's school in Ecuador provided American English lessons so, while she first struggled to understand the Kiwi accent, she had a good grasp of the language. She decided to step back to Year 11 to build up NCEA credits and is planning to study either accounting or engineering.



Rodrigo Clavijo with his artwork



Rodrigo, Sandra and Camila Clavijo

“She has an enormous desire to make a success of her new life in New Zealand.”

Her brothers Axel, 13, and Jean Paul, nine, have plunged enthusiastically into school life. Both are doing well at cross country – despite it not being a sport in Colombia – and have competed in the regional school zones' competition.

"Like many parents, our weekends are spent on the sides of sports fields," says Sandra. "Talking at football games is a good way to practise English."

"I was a secretary in Colombia and in Ecuador I worked in a call centre. The aim of my studies is to return to office and IT work."

"We attend the Colombian church in Lower Hutt. We've made many friends there, at Whitireia and through English classes. People have been kind and welcoming."

Sandra's successes are best summed up by Jacqs, who nominated Sandra for her award, describing her as a "strong-willed and determined learner who has achieved so much in such a short amount of time."

"It hasn't been easy for Sandra and her family. We are so proud of her success, and I wish her all the best for her future." ✂



Valuing the *Kiwi connection*

A major survey of English Language Partners' ESOL home tutors, past and current, has found this programme adds significant value to both learners' and volunteers' lives. Patricia Thompson

A major survey of English Language Partners' ESOL home tutors, past and current, has found this programme adds significant value to both learners' and volunteers' lives.

Online surveys were sent to nearly 1,500 current and former tutors. The study also included tutor focus groups, learner discussions, data analysis and a review of other research.

Through the ESOL Home Tutoring programme, English Language Partners New Zealand (ELPNZ) aims to help refugees and migrants settle effectively

and feel a sense of belonging. Another aim is for the country to benefit from the skills, knowledge, experience and connections of both learners and tutors.

The research confirmed that refugees and migrants benefit from improved English skills and understanding of New Zealand's culture and lifestyles. This helps them access community facilities and activities, make social connections and progress towards personal goals.

In turn, volunteers said tutoring helped them develop new skills, promoted personal development

and wellbeing and enhanced their understanding and empathy for other cultures.

"The thing I love most about being a home tutor is that I can learn about new cultures of countries that I could never travel to myself, and seeing my learners' experiences of discovering a new city gives me the opportunity to see where I live through different eyes." (Survey participant)

Chief Executive Nicola Sutton, says: "The uniqueness and value of the programme suggest real value is added to the successful settlement of refugees and migrants in New



Zealand. Therefore, we must find ways to ensure it can continue well into the future.

"It is an expensive programme to run: we are looking to increase its sustainability."

While many language classes are available in New Zealand, ELPNZ is unique in offering a volunteer programme where Kiwis visit people in their homes to teach English.

"The programme's value extends far beyond learning English skills," says Ms Sutton. "For learners, the advancement in English can be just one bonus. There's enormous value in having a trusted local to ask questions of – someone who can help navigate our 'everyday life' systems."

"I want to work in a school, as I was teacher in [home country]. The home tutor made contact with someone in school for me. Now I understand what training I need to do." (Survey participant)

This value was emphasised by tutors, who were asked about the most rewarding aspect of their work. Recognising the difference they were making in learners' lives was cited as the most satisfying aspect by 44

per cent of current tutors and 40 per cent of former tutors. However, the second highest reason given – for 17 per cent of current and 13 per cent of past tutors – was public good, or altruism – specifically with regard to settlement.

"[The most rewarding part is] helping refugees and migrants integrate and become confident by learning to not only speak but also learn about the New Zealand way of life." (Survey participant)

The findings also highlighted the benefits tutors gain: feeling welcomed into the homes of refugees and migrants and gaining new insights and understanding about people who are often from very different backgrounds from themselves.

"The warmth and friendship that ensues is often much more than the volunteer ever thought they would gain from participating in the programme," says Ms Sutton.

The benefits cited by tutors included: *"Meeting people who I would normally never meet"; "Getting to know the whole family and building a lasting friendship" and "The joy of making a new friend."*

Responses also showed that outcomes go way beyond the immediate learner and tutor. Learners' families can benefit too, such as parents gaining a better understanding of what is required from the school, or helping the family access health services.

"My son had an accident, and broke his elbow. I phoned the home tutor [and asked] "can you help?". A few minutes later they were there and helped me take my son to emergency department." (Survey participant)

Family and friends of tutors also gain from developing a better understanding of another culture, being invited to special festivities or seeing the tutor flourish from the sense of

meaning they get from their role.

"I feel like I'm an advocate, without getting on a soapbox. I try and connect stories and break down suspicion. I know my husband will talk about what I am doing proudly at Rotary." (Survey participant)

Employers may also benefit from staff gaining increased cultural competency and being able to better support and work with diverse cultures.

"Lots of people who haven't had this training get into wrong situations. At our work we get a lot of international nurses. The course was incredibly useful in supporting me to train our workforce." (Survey participant)

A 2008 report from the Ministry for Social Development underlined how social cohesion depends on people's interactions with and attitudes to each other, especially those they consider to be different from themselves.

"I don't have Kiwi friends. Getting to know [the tutor], we talk about New Zealand, something in the news. She is very patient, always smiling. Friendly." (Survey participant)

"The survey results underline what's happening through the ESOL Home Tutoring programme," says Ms Sutton.

"Through 'ordinary' Kiwis connecting with people from other cultures and sharing vital information about how we do things, and understanding how other cultures do things, we can help break down social barriers and make New Zealand a more accepting, safer country where people understand one another better." 🌱

Read the full report:
www.englishlanguage.org.nz/2017-research



Communicating *across cultures*

Each week, in a modest suburban home, English Language Partners brings three cultures together. Leigh Dome / Photos Leigh Dome

The Palmerston North home is where Trong Nhan (Edward) Nguyen from Vietnam, tutors Bhutanese refugee Ranga Lal Magar in English and the quirks of Kiwi conversation.

It was by happy accident that Edward became involved with English Language Partners. "I was walking to my restaurant job earlier this year and saw their sign outside."

He walked in and signed up as a volunteer tutor and was soon matched up with Ranga Lal.

Edward arrived in 2014 and studied at IPU New Zealand. He had secured an IPU scholarship, and over three years completed a degree in English Teaching, majoring in Language Studies. He now has his TESOL Certificate.

"I knew nothing about New Zealand and remember when I arrived, everything was new – the language, the culture, the food..." Edward says because he was here with some

school friends from Hanoi and they were all young, it made it easier to settle into their new life. "At first, I thought I was quite good at English and communicating. That was until I started working part time at a restaurant where they spoke very quickly and with a Kiwi accent!"

Through that personal experience, Edward says he can readily identify with how Ranga Lal feels as he tries to learn a new language and integrate into a new culture.

Edward says his role as a volunteer ESOL home tutor has been very valuable, as it has enabled him to put the theory he learned at IPU into practice. "Up until then, I had only tutored as an intern. I discovered quite quickly that tutoring a real person is very different from just learning about it."

Ranga Lal's son Yad, who interpreted for his father during the interview, says he is very proud of how much confidence and independence his

father has gained from his weekly tutorials. "He now checks the post and knows who has sent mail, and is able to use his ATM card."

Ranga Lal first started learning with English Language Partners a couple of years ago, soon after he arrived in New Zealand. When it became apparent his wife would require full-time care, he was unable to leave home to attend classes. He was happy to be offered an in-home tutor and hasn't looked back.

Edward says, "As an Asian, I have been brought up to respect and learn from my elders. It has been quite an adjustment for me to now be teaching someone older than my father."

The unlikely pair have discovered that one of their best learning tools is to put labels on everyday objects with the English words written on them. "Ranga Lal can then associate the English word with the object and continue to practise the word, even when I'm not there," says Edward.



At the start of every session they review the previous week's exercises, then introduce new phrases and words.

With minimal schooling and a life as a crop farmer back in Bhutan, Ranga Lal has had to learn how to learn. He says he enjoys the sessions with Edward, but admits his age can make it hard for him to retain what he has learnt at times.

Yad says he knows his father secretly practises words and phrases during the week. "I have found lots of scraps of paper with things written on them around the house!"

Edward says he has learnt from Ranga Lal too. "He reminds me when I speak too fast and our time together has highlighted other ways I can improve my teaching."

We are both getting better and better every week!" 🌸

Find out about volunteering:
www.englishlanguage.org.nz/teach-english

NETWORK NEWS

Northland Matariki

The Northland centre hosted a morning of good fun and friendship for their end-of-term Hakari o te Matariki.



Work Talking

Another successful class graduation for this Waikato Work Talk group. Learners completed the four-week intensive course – focused on learning how to find work and fit into New Zealand's work environment.



New Auckland volunteers

Another successful group of trainees about to start tutoring. North Shore's very keen group are from 10 different cultural backgrounds.



Celebrating National Volunteer Week

Timaru volunteers were treated to a pastry demonstration, followed by a shared pot luck dinner. The evening recognised volunteers' hard work and community spirit.



Bubblastic day out

Aisha Hamdi, with daughter Sema enjoyed the sunshine in Aotea Lagoon at the Porirua centre's fun-filled day.



Getting to know Otago

Our Dunedin centre has been welcoming refugees for just over a year. After visiting a sheep farm, three classes soaked up the sun on Allans Beach.



What we stand for

Sun Lyoung Kim

Sun Lyoung Kim gave the keynote address at Northland's 2017 Race Relations Day celebrations. Her speech, on the theme of 'That's us: What do we stand for? What do we stand against?', is drawn from her life experiences in Whangarei.

My name is Sun Lyoung Kim. Everybody calls me Sun. I have been in New Zealand for 21 years, and I am the mother of three children; one has just finished university, the second is attending university, and just my youngest remains at home.

We all cannot be the same; we have to be different, and that makes the world go around.

What do we need to stand for?

We need to stand for our identity. Yes, we are different and it won't change. Some people label us as an immigrant, an Asian, or a non-English speaker, but we have our names. We have to tell them we have our own name and we are proudly, very proudly – a New Zealander.

If you go out into New Zealand society, and immerse yourself as one of the community, be aware that, as an immigrant, there is a higher scrutiny and expectation of you. You have to be a better driver than the average Kiwi, you have to be a harder worker, you have to be more polite than the average Kiwi.

And then there is also the isolation that comes with looking and sounding different.

My daughter, who graduated with honours this May, applied for a job at one company, and was shocked at one of the rejection comments that came back with her application.



Sun Lyoung Kim with editor and friend Lesley Marshall

“We need to stand for our identity.”

The company said her visa status wasn't acceptable! They never even asked about her citizenship. She has a Kiwi passport, and a Kiwi accent but an Asian name. They just made an assumption about my daughter (who has a very good CV) Asian girl. But she is strong, and proud of who she is and her achievements, so, she stood up and spoke out about this problem and got an apology from the company.

So, if you meet unequal treatment or racism in our society, at school, at the hospital, in your job, or even from a neighbour, you have to stand against it. Racism or unequal treatment is not only just impolite behaviour, it is totally unacceptable in our daily life. By this I mean bullies, workplace illegal treatment – break time, holiday pay, sick leave – and family violence. It is our right as a citizen or resident or visitor to receive fair and just treatment, and to feel safe and unthreatened.

And part of your responsibility to earn the right to participate as a citizen, is that you have to immerse yourself into the local culture – and study, study, study the English language until you can speak it like a local. It will take time but please do not give up; English Language Partners and the New Zealand government will support your efforts. ✨

Sun Lyoung Kim has been published in the New Zealand School Journal, contributed to a Korean newspaper on New Zealand education and reviewed a novel by a Korean author for the New Zealand Listener. In 2016, Ms Kim won the Northland Society of Authors short story competition. Ms Kim is a former ELPNZ learner. ✨

DID YOU KNOW

We have **23** centres throughout New Zealand

English Language Partners supports

400,000 hours of teaching

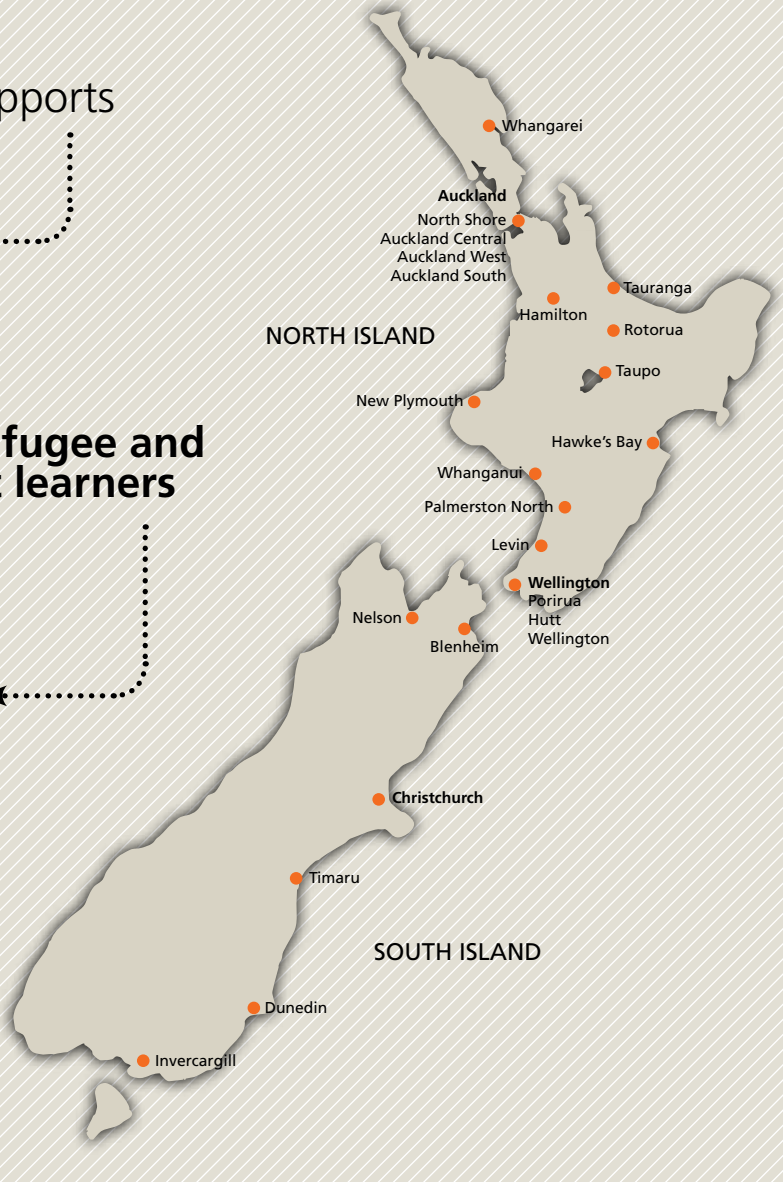


6,600 refugee and migrant learners

from over **150** countries



2,000 volunteer tutors



Volunteer and help new Kiwis settle in.

YOUR DONATION TODAY

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