

CONNECTING CULTURES

ISSUE 33 SPRING 2020



*English for work
& everyday life*

 **ENGLISH**
LANGUAGE PARTNERS
NEW ZEALAND
Working with former Refugees and Migrants

www.englishlanguage.org.nz

Volunteer | Donate



ENGLISH
LANGUAGE PARTNERS
NEW ZEALAND
Working with former Refugees and Migrants

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

Our programmes support diverse needs

In class

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

For work

English for Employees
Work Talk
Job Mentoring

At home

ESOL Home Tutoring
English for Migrants

Online



Kia ora

This issue of Connecting Cultures comes as I farewell the organisation, after 26 years with English Language Partners. In 1993, I first volunteered as an ESOL home tutor and have since worked in a myriad of roles, from resource librarian to national board member. In 2008, I joined the national office in Wellington as Operations Manager and was appointed Chief Executive in 2011. I am pleased to be leaving English Language Partners in such a strong position.

As Covid-19 continues to disrupt our lives, it is uplifting to hear from employers like Mark Pepperell at Tika Interiors who is helping staff to learn Kiwi workplace English. His staff's enthusiasm for learning has led to better communication in work situations.

ELPNZ Award winner Lubu Mashi went from just five words in English to being ready to study hairdressing. She also passed her restricted driver's licence while juggling full-time English classes and caring for her family.

Learners' stories of achievement have made coming to work each day at English Language Partners so rewarding. I know you will be inspired by the efforts these amazing people make in contributing to New Zealand.

Ngā mihi mahana

Nicola Sutton


Chief Executive

Donate

Help former refugees and migrants start new 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

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

This issue



4

Tika team walks the talk
Improving worksite communication with English Language Partners.



7

Zooming in on online learning
Pulling out all stops for lockdown learning.



12

We're helping one another
Retiree Trish Marshall is enjoying home tutoring.



15

Buzzing about English Language Groups
Rural employees gain English skills in Te Awamutu.



18

Honouring our award winners
Recognising the achievements of learners and volunteer tutors.



22

Navigating for newcomers
Community role aids settlement in Porirua.



24

Golden opportunity for NZCEL graduate
Better English helps set up family business.



26

Mask making win-win
Putting a donation to effective use in the community.



28

Job mentoring launches new career
Securing a perfect role.

© English Language Partners New Zealand 2020
PO Box 10119, The Terrace, Wellington 6143
Phone 04 471 2382 Email natoffice@englishlanguage.org.nz
Web www.englishlanguage.org.nz
Facebook www.facebook.com/EnglishLanguagePartnersNewZealand

Charities Registration Number CC51013
Editor Grace Bassett | grace.bassett@englishlanguage.org.nz
Design and production Paradigm
Cover Mark Pepperell and Mario Modesto Photo Michael Jeans
ISSN 1175-8945

 Follow us on facebook

Tika team *walks the talk*

Company boss Mark Pepperell couldn't be happier with the specialist skills and attitude of the Filipino tradesmen at Hamilton-based Tika Interiors Ltd.

Patricia Thompson | Photos Michael Jeans

However, Mark was keen for staff to learn more Kiwi 'work talk' and workplace culture.

A business English class, delivered by English Language Partners and tailored specifically to Tika's needs, has been the solution.

The 20 learners are enjoying the programme so much it may be extended beyond eight weeks, and Tika is thinking of offering similar programmes at their Auckland and Tauranga branches.

Tika specialises in complete commercial interior fit outs, including feature ceilings, plastering and insulation. Its Filipino staff are all specialist interior finishers.

"There aren't enough tradespeople in New Zealand with these skills, so we visited the Philippines and recruited about 20 men," says Mark. "We now have a Certificate of Accreditation from Immigration NZ and, to date, we've brought about 40 skilled workers

from the Philippines. Some have been with us for four years."

While the employees have reasonable spoken English, the company was encountering some communication issues.

"It's a cultural thing," says Mark. "They will naturally say 'yes' whether they've understood or not. They won't question it, so mistakes may happen. We do a performance review twice a year and score all our staff on different aspects of their work. A lot were scoring low on communications.

"Until they lift that, there's no way for them to step up in the business. It's important they feel comfortable to say if they don't understand, or to go and ask a question, whether it's of their site foreman or workmates. They're also keen to get residency, so improving their English will help them to further that."

"Tika are very focused on the welfare of their workers," says Jo de Lisle, English Language Partners Waikato ►





Mario Modesto,
Mark Pepperell and
Ariel Tagao



Bonnie Opena and Mark Pepperell

English Language Partners' tailored programmes involve working directly with businesses to customise training that targets the specific needs of their workforce.

Goals are to improve communication with other workers and with customers, ensure employees understand instructions and safety requirements, reduce mistakes and increase confidence, productivity and profitability.

Programmes can be delivered at the work site or another suitable location.

► manager. "The learners' day-to-day English is not bad and they know some technical words, but they don't understand Kiwi slang or idiomatic vocabulary and there's a lot of that on a construction site.

"We use Immigration NZ's 'More than words', with video clips of people

using idiomatic expressions. A Tika manager sits in for a part of the lesson and they'll talk about how they say something."

Class teacher Lara Hillary is Filipino and has been teaching for English Language Partners for six years.

"This class is great," she says.

“

I have a feeling they won't stop at eight weeks. I can see the classes going for quite a while.

– Mark Pepperell, Tika

”

"As I am Filipino, it's easy for me to understand what is lacking, especially around the learners' cultural education, and I can easily translate Kiwi terms. The class are so enthusiastic and eager to learn.

"Sometimes we talk about something specific that has happened and we also run through scenarios. I ask 'what would you say in this situation?' I can already see how much better they are doing from how they respond."

The company is paying part of the costs of the course, run after work one evening a week, and the learners pay the rest.

"When I asked who was interested, not a hand stayed down," says Mark. "Even guys who don't have a problem with English. I said 'you don't need to do it' but they all wanted to. They are never late for work and they are never late to class.

"We'll see the results when we do our next Performance Review, but they are already benefiting.

"I have a feeling they won't stop at eight weeks. I can see the classes going for quite a while." ✎

For more information on customised training
www.englishlanguage.org.nz/english-for-your-employees/



Daisy Julieth Compaz Pedroza

Zooming in on online learning

The announcement that New Zealand was going into Level 4 lockdown on 25 March saw English Language Partners teachers across the country spring into action to ensure classes were still delivered. ▶

Until lockdown, all classes had been delivered face-to-face. Yet, by 26 March online classes were underway, with 500 hours of classes attended by learners in the first week.

It has been so successful that learner surveys show the majority would be happy to continue with online learning. It has also opened up options for people living in remote rural communities who previously struggled to attend classes.

“Our teachers’ commitment made online learning happen,” says English Language Partners’ Chief Executive Nicola Sutton. “We trained teachers to use Zoom and provided licences so they could access all the features. By 30 March, 233 had trained in the technology, but many already had classes underway.

“Teachers quickly learned to adapt content to an online mode of delivery. They took up training opportunities and learned through their mistakes.”

Teachers used a wide range of platforms that they, and some learners were familiar with.

“Just two days after lockdown at Level 4, one of our staff saw a friend’s post on WeChat, a Chinese social media app, with a photo of her parents in an English Language Partners’ WeChat class!”

Jo Leach, programmes manager, says the speed at which teachers moved to online learning was remarkable.

“The level of innovation surpassed all expectations,” says Jo. “Teachers organised their own technology and phoned learners to tell them about classes and how to access them. We scrambled to provide training for our teams.”

As well as Zoom training, English Language Partners provided weekly online ‘drop in’ sessions for teachers, where they could ask questions and share tips. Free training for



David Wu

Nine weeks of lockdown: 22 March – 22 May

60,104 hours attended by learners

2,038 learners learnt online

318 English classes delivered

230 staff trained to use Zoom

81 Zoom licences bought

58 volunteers trained to use Zoom

44 daily newsletters to update staff

online ESOL teaching was sourced so teachers could further their skills. The national programmes team also published weekly newsletters with resources and teaching tips.

“The classes became more polished, as everyone got to grips with the new approach,” says Jo.

Some classes merged with others and some learners joined classes run by centres in other parts of New Zealand.

People used different tools. For example, WhatsApp was used by teachers to provide written corrections, and learners also used it to annotate their work before sending it back.

Centres requested online national classes to refer learners to where they did not have suitable classes. National classes proved popular, with

15 delivered by late September; many with wait lists. Classes include general listening and speaking, reading and writing and specific topics such as Grammar in the Real World, English for Customer Service, Speaking up at Work, Kiwi Speak, and Writing for IELTS (English proficiency tests).

There were obstacles. Internet access and suitable technology were barriers that a number of learners faced.

Limited English made it harder to engage online, and family responsibilities also added to the challenge for some.

Staff worked hard to match learners with volunteers and teachers using technology. Patricia Goddard in Auckland says: “I used three-way

Continues on page 10 ►

Lockdown learning

“When the lockdown was announced and we were told the lessons were going over to Zoom, I didn’t know what Zoom was.”

However, Anne Pentecost not only got to grips with Zoom to complete her English for Employees course during lockdown, she increased her Advanced Conversation classes from one session a week to two.

It was the first time she had delivered online classes in a long teaching career, which has spanned 25 years in secondary school French, teaching ESOL to overseas students at Otago Polytechnic and teaching a range of different classes with English Language Partners since 1995.

Anne learned about Zoom by watching ‘how to’ videos, then joined online training provided by English Language Partners.

Anne’s husband Ian also helped out, Zooming into Anne’s classes and chatting to her learners while she was logging on. The classes proved a great success.

“The learners loved them!” says Anne. “I felt so sorry for them, going through lockdown so far away from their families. So I added an extra weekly Advanced Conversation class.”

“I had all my worksheets ready to flick on to the whiteboard and we used breakout rooms. I really liked being able to get photos of what I had been doing and share them immediately.

“We did all sorts of things. They sent in some marvellous stories



Anne Pentecost with Dunedin learners

“

I’m a bit of a technophobe.

– Anne Pentecost, teacher,
English Language Partners

”

they’d written. I corrected them and then they read them out. We shared recipes too.

“We had one session where we looked at the old Mitre 10 TV advert with three little boys wanting to build a retaining wall and then the later advert with the same boys, 15 years later. We also viewed a snippet from Footrot Flats: The Dog’s (Tail) Tale (New Zealand’s first animated feature film) and listened to the Slice of Heaven song featured.

At the end of lockdown, Anne and Ian invited her learners to tea.

“It’s quite a small house and we didn’t have room for all of them, so we did a morning and an after-

noon tea and had half at each,” she says.

Once classes resumed at the Dunedin centre, one of her Zoom learners dropped by with a special thank you gift.

“He’s Russian and was a post-graduate student. He’s started a job in IT now,” says Anne. “He brought me a book about the Trans-Siberian railway. He knew we had been planning to visit China and Russia to go on the railway. It was a very kind gesture.” ✂

“

Our teachers’ commitment made online learning happen.

– Nicola Sutton, CE, English Language Partners

”

▶ video chat on WhatsApp to match volunteers from a recent training course with learners. It was a steep learning curve, but we got there.”

And online learning was not confined to classes. Many volunteers also got online with their learners.

Angela Botha, Hawke’s Bay centre manager, says: “Online learning was a huge support for our volunteers and the learners they usually teach at home. WhatsApp, Zoom, texts, emails and the telephone meant people could stay connected.”

“One volunteer sent us pictures of her laptop,” says Nicola. “It was set up on the kitchen table, surrounded by fruit and vegetables, letter tiles and paper ready for a lesson with her learner!”

“Another made videos in WhatsApp telling her learners what she was doing in isolation. She got lots of lovely emojis back and sometimes messages in Arabic.”

Online learning is now firmly embedded throughout English Language Partners and, in finding an agile solution to Covid-19’s challenges, we are able to provide more flexibility and accessibility for learners, wherever they live in Aotearoa. 🌐

Find out about online classes
www.englishlanguage.org.nz/learn-english-in-new-zealand/learn-english-online/

Our digital learning curve

Folo Solofa had never used online technology before New Zealand went into Level 4 lockdown. Until that point, all his English Language Partners classes’ had been delivered face to face.

Folo was so determined to continue his ESOL Intensive classes, that he learned how to get online remotely and became one of the most regular attendees.

Wellington centre teacher Christine Dykstra was delighted Folo ‘made it to class.’

“Getting online can be a struggle for some older people with very limited access to data or technical knowhow,” says Christine. “Folo is in his 70s and had no skills or experience with online technology but managed to participate successfully. Folo also now emails his homework!”

Folo was among the 2,038 learners who embraced online learning during the Alert Levels.

‘Kiwiana’ classes run by the Porirua centre during the April school holidays proved so popular that they added a second Zoom room.

Class teacher Hanschen Venter said the course covered terms like ‘bees’ knees’, ‘stoked’ and ‘sweet as’.

“Learning parts of Kiwi English is important,” says Hanschen. “It’s often where conversation breaks down when people develop English, as they have no idea what Kiwis are talking about. And unless you know, who could really link ‘It’s the bees’ knees to ‘it’s wonderful?’”

Hanschen presented the new ‘Kiwi Speak’ language and learners talked in breakout groups about what they thought the expression meant. Then they rejoined the main class to share. Hanschen said this provided a relaxing learning environment with a lot of laughter.



Folo Solofa

With seven children and her husband sharing her bubble, learner Cho Aye was very busy during lockdown, but still found time to participate in online classes run through her Palmerston North centre.

Cho's teacher, Helen Van Den Ende, says Cho took to online learning well and, as a keen gardener, particularly enjoyed a homework task where learners were asked to video their gardens and talk about them.

"Cho has always tried to do a little extra work beyond class to practise writing and spelling," says Helen. "She was a very present and active worker in Zoom classes and a real



Cho Aye and family

treat to have in class. While most learners sent in one video of their garden, Cho sent in three, describing

her extensive vegetable and flower garden. It was great to see Cho adapt to digital learning so easily."

For Wellington volunteer home tutor John Hobbs and learner Sar Gaw, keeping in touch by phone proved effective.

John and Sar Gaw had set a clear goal for Sar Gaw to improve his verbal skills by the end of the year. An important vehicle in that was through him engaging in conversations outside of his home.

"Sar Gaw had been using every opportunity to engage with people," says John. "So, at the bus stop, the supermarket, when he picks Lavender, his daughter, up from

school, he uses those opportunities to speak in English with others.

"At each of our sessions, we go through Sar Gaw's write-ups of his conversations during the previous week. We correct any spelling and talk about any grammatical matters."

Lockdown meant that a lot of the contact Sar Gaw was enjoying outside home was restricted but he and John talked regularly by phone instead.

"I was pleased we could keep our contact going during lockdown and I could continue to support Sar Gaw's drive to be proficient in



Sar Gaw and John Hobbs

“
We also had
conversations on
WhatsApp.”

– Sar Gaw, home tutor
learner, Wellington

English,” says John. “It is such a privilege to work with Sar Gaw. I so admire his courage, resilience and determination to learn English and do the best for his family in New Zealand.”

Sar Gaw says that, while he missed their face-to-face meetings, he was very glad to be able to maintain contact.

“John would call me during lockdown and we also had conversations on WhatsApp,” he says. “He encourages me and gives me guidelines. It has really helped me. Before, I would not have been confident to talk to strangers but, since meeting with John, I am more comfortable with that.” ✨

We're helping one another

On a good day, you can see all the way to Te Anau and the Hump Ridge Track," says Trish Marshall of the family's third generation farm at Pukemaori.

Patricia Thompson | Photos Gayle Clearwater

While looking forward to some more reading time in the idyllic setting when she retired from a nursing career in 2018, Trish was concerned she might end up "Glued to an armchair with a book".

Instead, she made a personal commitment to "Become involved in things." She joined Rural Women NZ, took up armchair yoga, began volunteering for Victim Support and trained as an ESOL home tutor with English Language Partners.

Since December, Trish has been working with learner Islam Rabai'ah, a young Jordanian woman. Islam's English is not only improving, she now has the confidence to catch a bus, which enables her to attend classes at English Language Partners' Southland centre.

"We're helping one another," says Trish, who makes a two-hour round trip every Wednesday to spend the afternoon working with Islam in Invercargill.

"I wanted to do something to keep my brain ticking over. My husband Russell and I have two children living overseas and we've travelled a lot, so have an interest in other cultures. I've always loved words and I found the training interesting, a lot of stuff rolled over from my nursing days, around privacy and documentation and respecting boundaries."

Islam was a geography teacher in Jordan but moved to New Zealand, with three year-old son Habib, to join her husband Belal Rashaideh, who works installing air conditioning.

"Islam is smart and eager to learn," says Trish. "She's a knowledge sponge, just soaks it up. She knew quite a few English words but needed to practise her English and build confidence.

"I teach her what she wants to know, that's what leads our learning activities. For instance, we went to the supermarket and I had a trolley and she had a trolley. I just checked with her every so often. Then, when we got to the tills, she went through the checkout herself. ▶



Islam Rabai'ah





Russell and Trish Marshall



Islam heard about English Language Partners from her husband who had gained a lot from an English Language Partners' programme.

"I enjoy my home tutor sessions because they are informal and we laugh a lot. I can do anything with Trish because she is teaching me about the New Zealand way of life, as well as English.

"It has enabled me to do things I could not do before. I can go to a café and order a coffee or a meal. I can go to the grocery shop by myself and to the library and get books, as well as attending the 'parents and children' session. I feel my confidence has improved and, as a result, I'm keen to try new things."



“

It's great to see Islam do things we take for granted, like reading the menu or ordering a coffee.”

– Trish Marshall

”

► “Next time she wanted to get groceries, we were going for lunch. So I dropped her outside the supermarket while I parked and by the time I'd found a space she'd got what she needed and was walking to meet me.”

Trish says using public transport was a novel experience for both.

“One day Islam said, 'Can we go on a bus?' Dear lord, I hadn't been on a bus for 40 or 50 years. So we went on an Invercargill City Bus and she got her ticket and loved it.”

Other learning outings have included the library, where Trish is encouraging

Islam to take her son for 'parent and child' reading sessions.

“Sometimes we go out for lunch. It's great to see Islam do things we take for granted, like reading the menu or ordering a coffee,” says Trish.

“I'm keen for her to meet more young mums her age. There are young people in her English class and I've introduced her to a lady who is involved with the mosque, who's good at connecting people.

“Islam's very social. She wants to be out in the world to have the English skills to enable her to work. She will get there, for sure.”

“Islam invited Russell and I over for tea. She and I yakked away, and Russell and Islam's husband yakked away. We're looking forward to getting them over to the farm in spring. I think they'll enjoy that.” ✂

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



Buzzing about English Language Groups

A job in beekeeping and desire for a better life and environment in which to raise their daughters were the impetus for Lindenberg Gomes and wife Vivian Maracajá's move. Joan Begg | Photos Lindenberg Gomes ▶

The family, whose first language is Portuguese, arrived in New Zealand from their native Brazil in 2016. They settled in Te Awamutu, where Linden works for Kiwi Bee Comvita.

Thanks to some high school lessons and four years' working in beekeeping in Hawaii, Vivian, and Linden, as he's come to be known in New Zealand, had some English-language skills.

But when they saw a piece in the local newspaper about an evening English Language Group (ELG) in Te Awamutu they jumped at the chance to improve.

English Language Partners runs the ELG for people who want the opportunity for more practical conversation in English.

"Vivian was the first to attend the group, and I started a few months after her as during the beekeeping season – spring and summer – I work long hours," says Linden.

The couple, like many others in the rural language groups across the Waikato region, have kept on attending.

"We love the classes, we love the teachers. It's not only about learning English, it's also about getting to know the local history, the curiosities, and the people from other parts of the world," says Linden.

The family is now applying for residency on the basis of Linden's skilled work. As part of the process, Linden and Vivian, who is also fluent in Spanish, needed to pass an English language test. Both have passed, and Linden says the ELG definitely helped them do so.

Linden says that while he and Vivian sometimes still struggle with English and with the Kiwi accent, their daughters Nicolle, 17, and seven-year-old Charllize are completely fluent.

The family enjoys living in Te Awamutu.

"It's small, but we have everything we want and it's not far from bigger cities," says Linden. "In terms of development, it's totally different from Puxinana, the small town in the state of Paraiba, northeast of Brazil where I grew up. Big supermarkets, clinics and gas stations are only found in the bigger cities in Brazil."

“

We love the classes,
we love the teachers.

– Linden Gomes,
learner, Waikato

”

"I have an unexplainable connection with New Zealand that has made me feel at home since the beginning. We have relatives and friends and three dogs that we left in Brazil and of course we miss them, but New Zealand is our place. We know a few Brazilians around Waikato, we get together sometimes."

Linden, who started studying beekeeping in 1997 in Brazil, is responsible for producing the queen bees for Comvita's Waikato branch.

"It's a very interesting part of the beekeeping process," he says. "I need to produce baby queens and catch them once they are adults and deliver them to the guys who produce honey. I used to do the same in Hawaii. It is not difficult but it requires a lot of patience and weekend work too."

"I love what I do because queen rearing gives me the opportunity of seeing the beginning of the bee's lifecycle. The organisation of a beehive and the way that bees work

together shows me that we humans still have a lot to learn.

"Beekeeping in Brazil is totally different from beekeeping in New Zealand as Brazil has Africanised bees that are very aggressive and therefore harder to work with."

Linden says he talks to the bees in English, and often sings too.

"I do it all the time! They seem to have no problem with my accent," he says. "I grew up very close to my Grandma and she always used to talk to animals and plants too. She always told me 'they don't talk, but they listen to you'."

"I usually spend my time looking for queens. If I don't see the queen easily, I'll say 'where are you big girl? Are you hiding from me?' Or, if I have to kill an old queen or a queen with problems, which happens sometimes, I always say sorry first. And when I'm in a hurry and the queens show up fast, I always say 'thank you'."

Linden is one of several beekeepers in his English class. "We always talk a lot about bees in English. Maybe too much."

Linden continued to work during lockdown, as beekeeping is an essential service.

"But we worry about our relatives in Brazil because the situation there is crazy and people are still thinking it's not so serious," he says. "We remind ourselves every day that we are very lucky to be here in this critical time." ✂

Contact your closest centre about
an English Language Group (ELG)
www.englishlanguage.org.nz/
our-centres



Learning English, making friends

English Language Partners' teacher Teresa Douglas has been running the English Language Group in Te Awamutu for the last five years.

The group, which is designed for people with some English language skills rather than absolute beginners, has two equally important aims, Teresa explains, to help the learners improve their English and help them integrate into New Zealand life.

"Currently, we have learners from Myanmar, the Philippines, Brazil, Germany, Ukraine, and Italy," says Teresa. "They include farm workers, beekeepers, an early childhood teacher, mechanics, some with home duties, Buddhist monks and more."

"We often discuss situations that occur in everyday life and local activities and events, in order to help them understand what is going on and have confidence in their interactions with others at work and in their social lives."

Teresa and two volunteer assistants run three concurrent programmes on Thursday evenings, enabling them to divide the learners into three groups depending on their level of English. All the learners get together for a mid-class coffee break.

"That's an opportunity for relaxed chatter in English," says Teresa. "Some of the learners have been coming for a while and have become firm friends."



Honouring our award winners

Our awards celebrate the achievements of former refugee and migrant learners and volunteer tutors. As Covid-19 cancelled our national ceremony, centres celebrated their winners, post-lockdown, at special local events.

Refugee Achievement Award

Given to learners from refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds who have made exceptional learning gains and achievements with their English language. This award carries a \$2,000 educational scholarship.

Aung Myo Palmerston North

Lubu Mashi Porirua

Outstanding Learning Achievement Award

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

Jaswinder Singh Auckland South

Joanne Song Hawke's Bay

Zheng Guo Waikato

Distinguished Volunteer Service Award

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

Ann Eustace Southland

Julia Potter Palmerston North

Leo Nolan Aoraki

Lynda Howells Dunedin

Lubu – *an outstanding achiever*

When Lubu Mashi arrived from Myanmar in 2017, she knew only five words in English: Good morning, Sunday and thank you.

Joan Begg | Photos Stevie Hight

Lubu is fluent in Kachin, the Tibetan Burmese language of the Kachin people of Myanmar, and also in the Burmese/Myanmar language.

She had only three years' formal education but, since joining the Pathway ESOL class run by English Language Partners in Porirua in October 2017, her progress has been exceptional. This year she was named as a winner of English Language Partners' national award for Outstanding Refugee Achievement.

Lubu has now completed Levels 1 and 2 of the New Zealand Certificate in English Language (NZCEL) with English Language Partners and is currently studying Level 3 at Whitireia Polytechnic. NZCEL is an intensive, full-time course, three to four hours a day, Monday to Friday. With the high level of immersion in English, language learning is fast.

Her teachers all comment on her ability, dedication to learning and willingness to help her classmates. She is also an active participant in her learning groups' social media pages.

"I feel so much more confident than when I arrived," she says. "I am able to understand much more, thanks to these classes.

She would encourage anyone coming to New Zealand without English to join a class. "Try hard and at the end you will be able to speak English".

Lubu arrived with her husband and two young sons, now six and ten years old, after eight years living in a refugee camp in Thailand.



“

I feel so much more confident
than when I arrived.

– *Luby Mashi, learner, Porirua*

”

They were keen to live in New Zealand to be away from the fighting and conflict in their part of Myanmar and be close to her husband's mother and brother who moved here in 2010, and who also live in Porirua.

Although pleased to be in New Zealand, “It was very hard at the start,” says Luby, “not being able to speak English.” They couldn't understand what was said and couldn't be understood without the help of a translator.

While she found learning English hard at times, she says that attending class every day, practising writing, talking and listening has made a huge difference. She and her classmates also talk in English, their only common language, outside the classroom.

Alongside her English studies, Luby has also attended a speech and pronunciation class, completed English

Language Partners' course to help with achieving a restricted driver's licence, and has regular sessions with a home tutor.

With her current course finishing in November, Luby is planning to continue her English learning, but she also has her heart set on a career. Having helped out and learned some hairdressing skills at a salon a friend set up in the Thai refugee camp, she now plans to enrol for the next hairdressing course at Whitireia.

Juggling her English studies with family life has been busy, but the NZCEL courses fit in with school hours and she's able to collect her children from their primary school at the end of the school day.

Although learning English is a significant part of their life, Luby and her family use their Kachin language at home and with the Kachin community in Porirua.

At weekends, the family enjoys regular catch-ups at their church, North Porirua Baptist Church, with about 50 other adults and children from their region in Myanmar. ✨

For more about NZCEL

www.englishlanguage.org.nz/learn-english-in-new-zealand/nzcel/



English Language
Partners New Zealand
Awards



Ann Eustace
with Board Member
Mark Bryan

Dedication *above and beyond*

Ann Eustace finds it hard to put a finger on what inspired her to train to be a volunteer home tutor 22 years ago.

Patricia Thompson | Photos Gayle Clearwater

The dedicated service Ann has given to English Language Partners in so many ways, was recognised on 14 August with the presentation of a 2020 Distinguished Volunteer Service Award at a special event at the Southland centre.

Over the years, Ann, from Invercargill, has home tutored 14 learners from countries including Fiji, Hungary, Russia, Chile, Germany, Iraq, Japan and Colombia. Her learners' successes include a young Hungarian man who had minimal English, but is now teaching English in Japan to others.

"Looking back, perhaps it all began when a teenager from Thailand come to stay for an exchange trip," says Ann.

"That might have been what sparked my interest in helping people to learn English."

When Ann first began volunteering, she was combining that role with her career as CEO of the ILT Foundation and also volunteering to help teach young aviators, having held her private flying licence for 25 years.

Now retired, she continues to home tutor and also volunteers with an ESOL literacy class.

"The great satisfaction of tutoring is that you make a difference," says Ann. "When I started, I wanted to help and to do something that challenged me."



“
The great satisfaction of tutoring is that you make a difference.
 – *Ann Eustace, volunteer, Southland*

”

“I really enjoy seeing learners progress, that is such a buzz. Often you can see they are improving, but have to provide a lot of encouragement. I always find something the learner wants to do, so they have a goal to strive for, whether it’s a job application or a driving licence.

“One Japanese lady, Miho, did not speak any English at all apart from ‘please’ and ‘thank you,’ so we started with pictures. She is fluent in English now.”

When Miho had her first baby, she and her husband were worried they may forget their English during the delivery.

“They told me their birthing plan and asked if I would come along to help if they got stuck,” says Ann. “So there I was, waiting outside a delivery room and I got to be the third person to cuddle the brand new baby girl after her mum and dad, a special privilege.”

When a Russian learner’s second child was born with significant health issues, requiring long hospital stays, Ann also travelled to Auckland and Christchurch to stay with the baby in hospitals, so her mother could spend time with her husband and older child. “The beautiful baby is two now and I am looking forward to going to visit the family again very soon,” she says.

“My former learners are spread around New Zealand and the world now. I am still in touch with so many of them, and our first Thai homestay too. They still visit us and, if their families visit, they like to bring them to see us too, to show them that they have friends and support in New Zealand.

“My husband Lewis is very accommodating and welcoming of all the visitors we have had over the years. We have also met up with former learners on overseas holidays.”

“All my work with English Language Partners has been personally rewarding.” 🌟

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

Navigating for newcomers

During the years she worked as a teacher with English Language Partners, Andrea Buckland often found herself helping learners who were having difficulties dealing with New Zealand's social support, health and government systems.

Ruth Nichol | Photos Stevie Hight

As a teacher, there was a limit to how much hands-on support Andrea could provide. "We could do things like help them understand official letters, but we couldn't go to appointments or help sort out ongoing issues," she says.

A recent job change means Andrea is now able to fill that gap. On 6 August, she started working as Porirua's inaugural Newcomers Hapori Kaiwhakare/Community Navigator to provide more intensive pastoral support to newcomers.

"As well as providing information and making referrals, I can actually go with them and help make accessing services easier, which is great."

The Hapori Kaiwhakare service is a joint project initiated by four organisations: English Language Partners, the Porirua Multicultural Council, Positive Impact Consultancy and Glenview School.

The role is similar to one established in Nelson where the community navigator helps people to find jobs, access health services, find housing and deal with agencies such as Inland

“

People often don't know where to go for social support.

– Andrea Buckland,
community navigator

”

Revenue, WINZ and Immigration New Zealand.

The new service is available to all migrants and former refugees in the Porirua area. New refugees receive settlement support for the first year from Red Cross so Hapori Kaiwhakare focuses on working with all other newcomers.

"The service is for anyone who is having difficulties understanding the system, it doesn't matter if they've been here for a while," says Andrea.

Jacqs Wilton, manager of English Language Partners Porirua, says the organisations behind the initiative realised there was a gap in supporting people in the 'post-settlement' period.

"People often don't know where to go for social support and they don't know what the systems are," she says. "So people working in the sector, like us, would be supporting people to go to WINZ or to the local MP's office. It meant we were doing a lot of hours that took us away from our core business."

Setting up the service has been a collaboration between the four organisations, all of which are involved in helping newcomers to Porirua integrate successfully into New Zealand.

English Language Partners was responsible for finding the initial funding, which came from philanthropic trusts: the Nikau Foundation, the Wellington Community Trust and the Working Together More Fund, as well as the Department of Internal Affairs.

The Porirua Multicultural Council is taking on administrative responsibilities, managing the budget and overseeing the contract. The Council's chair, Angus Ward, says that, like English Language Partners, they were aware of the need to provide on-go-

ing support, particularly for those for whom English is a second language.

“People would come to us, and it became increasingly obvious that they needed someone who could dedicate more time to their case.”

For Latu To’omaga, director of Positive Impact Consultancy, being involved in the initiative is a natural extension of his work supporting Pasifika and Maori communities. “I became aware of the need to engage with the whole of our community.”

He will provide advice on strategic planning and how to support the wellbeing of newcomers.

Lynda Knight-de Blois, principal of Glenview School in Porirua East, who is also the principal representative on Porirua’s Strengthening Families management group, provided input to the collective. Her school is one of several in the area with children who come from a refugee or migrant background. Across the suburb they include families from Syria, Burma, South America and Myanmar, as well as Pasifika families.

Like the other organisations involved in setting up the new role, she and her staff found themselves spending time they didn’t really have to support newcomer families experiencing difficulties with things such as housing.

“Recently, one of our staff took a Syrian woman to look at local kindergartens for her children. It’s extra work and it’s not part of our core business and we’re not funded for it, but obviously you can’t not do it.”

She says the response to the initiative has been extremely positive.

“A huge range of people have said there’s a real unmet need, and that it’s really filling a gap.” ✨

Learn more about this service

Email Andrea at poriruank@gmail.com



Golden opportunity for NZCEL graduate

When Sidra Smaism and her Syrian family arrived in New Zealand from a refugee camp in Lebanon four years ago, none of them spoke more than a few words of English. Ruth Nichol | Photos Stevie Hight



After a six-week stay at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre the family, who left Syria eight years ago to escape the civil war, settled in Porirua. Sidra, 20, attended Porirua College for two years before studying hairdressing at Whitireia Polytechnic.

By then, her English had improved considerably, but she wanted to make more progress. Last year, she completed English Language Partners' New Zealand Certificate in English Language (NZCEL) Level 2, an 18-week, intensive full-time course.

Now thanks to the English skills she gained on the course, Sidra is work-

ing at Golden Scissors: her family's recently opened hairdressing salon in central Porirua, cutting hair and also taking bookings over the phone.

"I wanted to improve my spoken English so I could talk to customers on the phone, and while I was cutting their hair," says Sidra, who works at Golden Scissors with her father Hussein and her mother Najlaa. "I wouldn't have been able to do that before I did the course, I would have been too shy."

NZCEL Level 2 is an intensive course with a high level of immersion in English. Friendships form between people from a range of backgrounds

and they communicate in English with each other outside the classroom.

Sidra enjoyed the course, which was attended by people from several other countries including Vietnam, Colombia and Myanmar.

"I definitely recommend it. It was very friendly, and it was also good for my writing and reading skills. Now I find it easier to use a computer for doing things like searching for things on Google."

With no other Arabic speakers on the course, she had to speak English all the time, which she admits was a good thing: "If you talk together in the same language, it's not good!"



Sidra Smaism

“

I wanted to improve my spoken English so I could talk to customers on the phone.

– Sidra Smaism, learner, Porirua

”

As a trained hairdresser, Sidra works with female clients in the salon, while her father who, together with Najlaa is doing an English Language Partners' course one day a week, works with male clients.

The Smaism family opened the Golden Scissors on 7 July, and their customers come from all around the world. Shortly after they opened, the business featured on the TV1 news show Breakfast as well as on Stuff.

For Sidra, becoming a hairdresser has provided other unexpected opportunities. Last year, she worked as a voluntary hairdresser for the World of WearableArt (WOW) in

Wellington, helping create hairstyles to match the extraordinary clothing that featured in the show. “It was so different,” she says.

At the moment, she's busy working at the salon, but she hopes to do more study with English Language Partners. “I want to get even better at English because I have to talk to the customers.” ✂

Learn more about NZCEL
[www.englishlanguage.org.nz/
learn-english-in-new-zealand/
nzcel/](http://www.englishlanguage.org.nz/learn-english-in-new-zealand/nzcel/)



Faga Asi (left)
with mask maker
Thi Giang Sung



Farzana Nisha



Mask making *win-win*

“Teresa called me and asked, ‘What’s on top,’ says Jacqs Wilton, manager, English Language Partners Porirua. “I said ‘masks,’ so she put \$1,500 into our bank account.” Patricia Thompson | Photos Stevie Hight

Teresa Moore is CEO of United Way NZ, a charity that distributes donations. United Way’s donation snowballed into a successful project with multiple benefits for English Language Partners’ learners and the wider community.

Jacqs used the donation to purchase fabric to make masks, and learners at the centre’s ‘Mums and Tots’ class cut out the masks ready for sewing.

The centre then put out a call for learners with sewing skills, offering a koha for each mask. 200 were

completed, allowing English Language Partners to gift two masks to each learner who needed them.

ChangeMakers Resettlement Forum then held a workshop at English Language Partners, with the centre’s mask-sewers, Amina Gharib, Boshra Najem, Hajar Dandesh and Giang Sung, teaching people to make masks.

“This donation has been a win-win in multiple ways,” says Jacqs. “Rather than buying masks, we worked with learners to make them.

“By using the language for sewing and measuring fabric, learners developed linguistic and numerical skills. Our mask sewers gained teaching skills, sewers were acknowledged for their work, and the collaboration with ChangeMakers has been great too.”

Jacqs says the project, chronicled through the centre’s Facebook page, caught the attention of the wider community. “People say they love what we’re doing.”

“The people we work with are so kind, they appreciate what we do, and have



“

With the coronavirus it's very good to have masks, especially children going to school.

– Amina Gharib, learner, Porirua

”

shown how they really care for their new community. Giang gifted masks to our team, made using her own fabric with a kiwi print. I was quite teary-eyed!”

“Families have helped out too. Amina Gharib's husband Abdullah sent a photo of him preparing dinner while she sewed 40 masks!”

Amina says she also made masks for her children and their friends.

“With the coronavirus, it's very good to have masks, especially children going to school.” 🌸

A mayoral visit

“Crikey, you're doing well – 40 masks!” said Porirua City Mayor Anita Baker when she saw the masks made by Amina Gharib.

Mayor Baker learned to make masks at the workshop, which saw an English Language Partners' classroom transformed into a hive of activity, around multiple sewing machines.

The event was organised by ChangeMakers Resettlement Forum, a grassroots non-governmental organisation representing over 17 refugee-background communities in the Wellington region.

We're involved in a number of communities in Porirua,” says ChangeMakers' community development worker Tracey Read. “People were already sewing masks for learners and volunteers on our driving licence programme. We thought it would be great to do something for the public, with sewers sharing their skills.

“Sewing machines were donated through the Red Cross 'Pathways to Employment' programme and are available for the community to use.”

Mayor Baker, who confessed her sewing machine skills were generally limited to “Repairs and taking up hems”, was an enthusiastic learner, with Amina guiding her through cutting, tucking and sewing a mask.

“It was very impressive,” said Mayor Baker. “Amina is a very good teacher.”

Our Porirua centre's Mums and Tots' class ensures mothers with pre-schoolers are not isolated at home. They meet other mums, learn English and get out into the community to learn about opportunities for them and their children. For more on the range of English classes see, www.englishlanguage.org.nz/learn-english-in-new-zealand/learn-english-in-class/



Job mentoring launches new career

For Isabel Poblete Echeverria, teaching Spanish in New Zealand enabled her to work and stay within her 'comfort zone,' but in her heart, she knew she wanted a role that would challenge her.

Patricia Thompson | Photos Stevie Hight

Participating in English Language Partners' Job Mentoring Service helped Isabel find a library job, exactly what she was looking for.

Isabel left her native Chile five years ago, where she had worked on social projects and in the library sector. Since then, she has lived in three different countries.

"There have been many ups and downs," Isabel says. "While I've had some sporadic jobs, I haven't been able to work in the library sector due to language barriers and relevant qualifications. Last year, I came to Wellington with my partner. I have been lucky enough to have a strong

support network of family and friends who have given me good advice about the Kiwi lifestyle.

"I started my job hunt. At first, I stayed within my comfort zone, teaching Spanish. Even though I enjoyed the classes with my students it distanced me from the local culture."

Isabel realised she needed a job that would both challenge and help her integrate better so she joined the Job Mentoring Service.

The service, unique to the Wellington centre, trains volunteer job mentors to help skilled job seekers find meaningful employment. Mentors are





professionals in a wide variety of fields, with good connections, knowledge and experience. Isabel's mentor is Birgit Grafarend-Watungwa, Operations Manager for English Language Partners.

"Isabel wanted to identify the work she was looking for," says Birgit. "So we reviewed her skills, past work experiences and what she was passionate about.

"We reviewed her CV to make it specific to New Zealand, then did the same with her covering letters.

"Job mentors also act as referees. It's often difficult for newcomers to provide New Zealand-based referees, which employers look for."

Job seekers also meet weekly for peer support, because applying for jobs can be a lonely process, especially when you are new to the country.

Meetings include specific job search topics and specialist speakers, such as recruitment professionals. Isabel found this a great opportunity to visualise her purpose in a practical way.

"I've learned that objectives are accomplished one step at a time. I've broadened my perspective and appreciate that new contexts bring new experiences," she says.

"Deep down, I knew my most rewarding work experience was working in a library. Nevertheless, I was hesitant to find a similar position in a different country."

She began searching Wellington's library network for suitable vacancies.

"Every time a related job appeared, I applied for it. I applied and applied until eventually, it became a job in itself. On one occasion I received a call for an interview, and, with high expectations, I went. Later, they sent me the rejection email. 'Okay', I thought, 'I'm not ready yet, but at least the experience helped me'. ▶



Birgit Grafarend-Watungwa and Isabel Poblete Echeverria

“

With my energies renewed, I am excited to start this new challenge.

– Isabel Poblete Echeverria, job seeker, Wellington

”



Isabel with co-worker, Eirini Antonogiannaki, at Karori Library

to write the email, attaching my application again. With limited expectations, I was surprised when he said they’d reconsidered my application and would interview me.

“I prepared with a list of questions they might ask. My interview was not amazing, I was very nervous, but I showed the skills that I had learnt from previous positions and my interest and desire to learn. One week later, they offered me the position!”

Just after Isabel was offered the role, the Government announced Alert Level 4 lockdown. She began her new job by training remotely, but she is now working in libraries. She is passionate about encouraging children’s reading and has recently been assisting with ‘parent and child’ story sessions.

“I know that this will be overwhelming sometimes, but it will all be worth it,” she says.

“With my energies renewed, I am excited to start this new challenge.” ✨

► “The next time I applied for a similar role, I analysed the job description and went to the library to check it out. I realised how important networking is to understand your field. I had a couple of coffee catch-ups with very nice people who currently or have previously worked in the same role.

“That gave me a real insight into the expectations and responsibilities. Thanks to Birgit, I changed my CV and

cover letter, matching my skills with the job profile in a concise way. Happy with my application, a few days later I received a new rejection. By this time, my spirit was not the best.”

Birgit encouraged Isabel to ask for feedback on why she hadn’t been successful, to help her with future applications.

“I wrote directly to the team lead,” says Isabel. I followed some templates

More about Job Mentoring
contact our Wellington Centre
www.englishlanguage.org.nz/wellington/

DID YOU KNOW

We have **22** centres throughout New Zealand

English Language Partners supports

450,000 hours of teaching



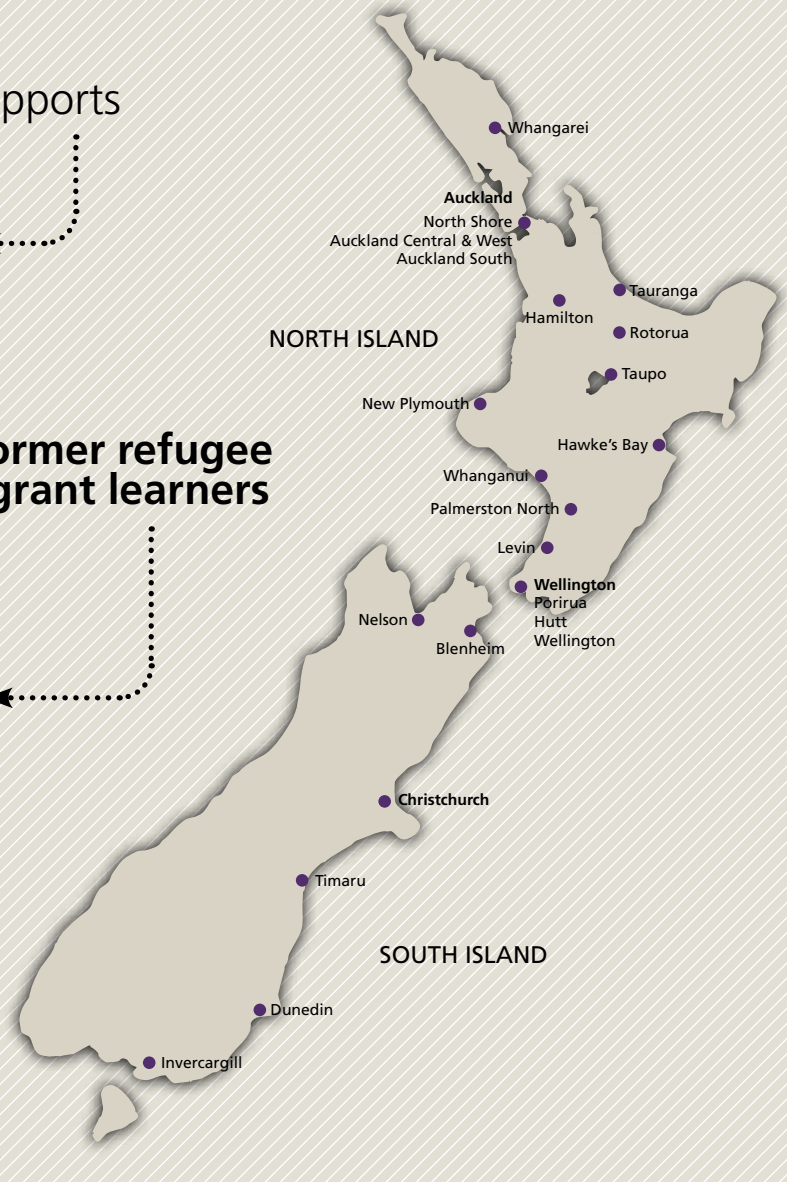
7,000 former refugee and migrant learners



from over **150** countries



1,500 volunteer tutors



Volunteer and help new Kiwis settle in.

YOUR DONATION TODAY

helps new Kiwis make a fresh start in Aotearoa.

3 EASY WAYS TO DONATE

- 1** Mail the coupon to Freepost 244665 ELPNZ, PO Box 10119, The Terrace, Wellington 6143
- 2** Online at englishlanguage.org.nz
- 3** Call free on 0800 367 376

Work with former REFUGEES & MIGRANTS



Volunteer | Donate

 **ENGLISH**
LANGUAGE PARTNERS
NEW ZEALAND
Working with former Refugees and Migrants

www.englishlanguage.org.nz

Settling in is easier if you understand the Kiwi way of life.
Join over 1,500 volunteers helping adult former refugees and migrants.



ENGLISH
LANGUAGE PARTNERS
NEW ZEALAND

Working with former Refugees and Migrants

I'D LIKE TO HELP!

Please send me information on

- making a regular donation
 payroll giving
 volunteering

Please sign me up

- I would like to receive *Connecting Cultures* journal. (Put your name and address overleaf.)

✓ YES, I'LL HELP A LEARNER TODAY.

Name

Address

.....

.....

.....

My gift

\$35 \$50 \$100 \$200 Other \$

My payment

Please find enclosed my cheque made payable to "ELPNZ"

Please mail to Freepost 244665, ELPNZ, PO Box 12114,
Thorndon, Wellington 6141

► Internet banking

ELPNZ account number: 06 0507 0017792 12
Particulars: Your initials and surname
Reference: CC33

► To donate by credit card please visit us online:
www.englishlanguage.org.nz/donate

Thank you!

Your contribution is greatly appreciated.
A receipt will be sent to you.