Background

The Refugee Language Program was created in 2004 as the result of an initiative by Fellows of the University Senate and was set up with University funding to offer free language tuition to refugees. Classes in intermediate and advanced level English are held on campus during the week and on Saturday mornings. All the teachers are volunteers from university academic staff, students or alumni with the skills appropriate to the Teaching of English as a Second Language. We have also trained staff members and students to become Home Tutors to go into refugee's homes and help with their English study.

Many of our refugee students are ineligible to attend Government sponsored English classes. Many of our students suffer from economic and social deprivation or have suffered torture and trauma in their countries of origin. Our program helps, in some measure, to alleviate the dislocation and isolation that these people suffer, as well as providing language skill classes at no cost.

From 2005 to 2010 the program has become part of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, where it has an office and other facilities. The University continues to contribute to the cost of running the program.

Eligibility

Refugees holding Temporary Protection Visas, those on Bridging E Visas as well as Habeas Corpus asylum seekers are eligible to enrol. In some cases we also accept refugees who have permanent resident status. If students are unsure about the location of the university we send maps and directions on how to get there.

Timetable

On Wednesdays we run an Academic English class followed by a conversation hour with volunteers. On Saturdays we run a creative writing class, which starts at 9.30 and finishes at 12.30 as well as an Intermediate English class. We follow our Saturday classes with a light lunch and conversation with staff and volunteers.

Saturday Classes are held in the Education Building and the Wednesday class is held in the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, situated in Arundel Street on the Glebe side of the university. We also have a small group of volunteers who assist refugees in their home or the local library with English studies. Visits are generally for 1 to 2 hours.

Donations

In 2010 we would like to raise enough money to pay for some running costs of the program. Although the university does provide the salary and facilities for the co-ordinator, we also need funds to cover our lunches after class as well as fare re-imbursements for those students who would find it impossible to come to class without some financial help. We would also like to publish another small anthology of students' creative writing.

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