Refugee Language Program

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. Staff members and students have also been trained to become mentors who visit refugees in their local area to 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 2013 to 2015, the Pratt Foundation has provided funding for the program. This funding finished in 2016 and we are looking for further funding from organizations or individuals.

Eligibility
Refugees holding Temporary Protection Visas, those on Bridging E Visas and Asylum Seekers in Community Detention are eligible for our classes. Our students change as new wars and new dictators emerge. When we began students came primarily from the Sudan and Afghanistan, whereas in 2015 students come from Iran, Burma, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and many other countries. Most of our students are young to middle-aged males.

Timetable
In 2016 we ran a tutoring session on Wednesday evenings in the Mackie Building at the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies. Ten tutors would meet 10 asylum seekers and work with them for 2 hours on their English needs.

On Saturdays we run 3 classes; an Advanced Skills class with a strong IELTS focus, an Intermediate general skills class and a Conversation and Technology Class. The English classes start at 9.30 and finish at 12.30. We follow our Saturday classes with a light lunch and conversation with volunteers. After lunch, students can go to the Conversation and Technology class in the Education Building where they are given individual training by a group of tutors or they can remain in the common room and chat to the volunteers

Mentoring
SULS Refugee Tutoring Program holds a two-hour mentoring class on Mondays from 5-7pm in the Law School. About 20 students attend regularly.

Other mentors make individual arrangements with their students and meet them near their home at a time that suits them both.

Donations
You can download a gift form from our website. All donations are tax-deductible. http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/peace_conflict/rlp/index.shtml

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