

Report from the Migrant English Program for 2021

21 Feb 2022

For those who have not heard of this Program, it is a community outreach program sponsored by U3A Manningham, to offer free help to migrants (called “learners”) to improve their English, focussing on conversation. Tutoring sessions could cover vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, listening, speaking, reading and writing.

2021 continued to be a challenging year due to Covid-19 as tutors could not meet their learners in person. Tutoring sessions continued over Zoom, Whatsapp, Face Time or some similar app. For those not able to make use of technology, contact was maintained over the phone.

At present, the Program has 59 Migrant English Tutors, 38 of whom are tutoring 54 migrant learners.

Although we normally hold two meetings per year for tutors to catch up and exchange ideas, these meetings were not held in 2021. However we are planning to hold them in 2022.

What was new in 2021?

1. **Google Form:** We started using Google Forms to collect information instead of emails, which freed us from having to manually copy information from email responses into a database.
2. **Certificate of Appreciation:** We decided to recognise tutors who have served 5+ years to thank them for their service to the community. The Certificates will be awarded for the 1st time in February 2022, at our Migrant English Tutor’s Meeting.
3. **ZOOM for Tutor Training Course:** Due to the lockdown, the Tutor Training course was mainly conducted using ZOOM for the 1st time. It turned out surprisingly well and there was good interaction among the trainees and tutors.
4. **Technology as a teaching aid:** A session on the use of technology as a teaching aid was introduced in the Tutor Training course and a comprehensive list of teaching/learning resources from the internet was provided.
5. **Follow-Up sessions:** At the request of the newly-trained tutors, several follow-up sessions were held for the 1st time, to enable them to seek help and share resources.
6. **Additional support for tutors:** A survey was conducted to find out whether our tutors needed additional support, which would be implemented in 2022 if required. About 10 tutors expressed interest. The proposed support activities were:
 - **ZOOM Training:** Training for tutors to use Zoom to hold tutoring sessions with their learners
 - **Refresher Course:** Short refresher training course for tutors on various topics
 - **Catchups:** Meetings (in-person or via Zoom) for tutors to share experiences and resources or seek help from one another
7. **Whatsapp group:** A collaboration facility was set up for our tutors where they can request for/provide assistance to each other, share resources such as documents and links to useful websites on the internet, and share their insights.
8. **Catalogue of Migrant Education Resources:** Teaching resources for the use of tutors, in the form of books and CDs, were finally catalogued. The catalogue was sent to the tutors to make them aware of what was available.

Statistics

For those who like statistics, 2021 saw the following:

- 7 tutors have provided 10+ years of service and 19 tutors have provided 5+ years
- Our tutors provided a total of 695+ tutoring hours in 2021, compared to 1,470 hours in 2019
- 13 new tutors were trained and 8 tutors retired, resulting in a total of 64 tutors
- 24 learners started and 6 learners discontinued, resulting in a total of 55 learners
- 28 tutors have 1 learner, 10 tutors have 2 learners, 2 tutors have 3 learners