

My story
My name is Marwan
I came from Somalia
I came to New Zealand 2009
I have 6 children
They are 18 15 15 11, 18 7 years and old
I didn't go to school My country
I speak Somali and some
English
I started coming to this class
in March this year

“A THOUSAND STEPS, A LONG TIME, A LOT OF WORDS”:

The perceived and observed benefits of a community-based ESOL literacy programme for migrant and former refugee women

By Celia Hope

CENTRE FOR LANGUAGES 2013

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Wintec

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Te Kuratini o Waikato

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The Centre for Languages has taught English language to learners from refugee backgrounds, migrants and international students for a number of years. The Centre consults closely with the community to ensure it offers the type of language classes that will be of most value to potential students. The Centre's staff comprises a team of very experienced teachers from many different countries and backgrounds and they deliver a diverse mix of purpose-designed language focused teaching programmes to a broad cohort of learners for whom English is not a native language.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to all those women who,
despite their busy roles as mothers and home managers,
embark on the pathway of further education,
not just for their own sakes but for the benefits that it brings
their families, communities and society as a whole.

“ ... if you educate a woman, you educate a family.”

James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey (1875 – 1927),
from a lecture delivered in Ghana to persuade Governor Guggisberg
that a college should be co-educational (Wikipedia, 2013).
Others have adapted this quote to say *a generation, a village or a nation*.

*“[The programme] doesn’t help only my mum, it helps all our family relatives ...
because when she learn a language she will improve her language.
[It] takes time to understand that but language the key.
**When you got the key you can drive but the first time the car
is going slowly. The more you learn the more you go fast.**”*

Abdulkhader Suleiman
Son of migrant mother in ESOL literacy programme

The words in the title *“A thousand steps, a long time, a lot of words”* are also Abdulkhader’s.

ABSTRACT

Accessing, and even attending an English language class is often an impossibility for women from migrant and refugee backgrounds, particularly for those with young children and for those whose role is very much as a full time mother. Because of this role and in many cases limited English language and literacy skills, these women are often isolated and dependent on spouses or children to interpret the language and assist with everyday tasks and understanding of the culture of this new country.

A community based ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) literacy programme for migrant and former refugee women was developed in 2006 by Wintec's School of English (now Centre for Languages), to provide English language and literacy classes that are accessible for women who are in this situation. This programme is held in a local primary school attended by many of the women's children with provision for pre-school children to attend the programme alongside their mothers. This has allowed the women to study with other adults while still having their babies and preschool children close enough to feed and feel secure. As well as English language and literacy, the programme provides an opportunity for these women to gain skills to participate more fully in the community where they live.

This study explored the perceived and observed benefits that the programme provided the women who attended it, their families and community. The study also explored areas for further development. The participants in the study were 18 current and former students, 10 key stakeholders in the community, two family members and the author, as teacher and researcher. The data were collected using several methods: a questionnaire, interviews with the students and stakeholders, and the author's observations. Most of the interviews with students were conducted with the assistance of a professional interpreter.

Analysis of the data confirmed that the benefits of the programme went beyond gains in English language, literacy, numeracy and learning-to-learn skills. As well as education gains for the women, there were gains for their families and communities, and subsequent effects in terms of participation and inclusion, in addition to emotional and wellbeing gains. The women and their families became more engaged in education and society which assisted their settlement in Aotearoa/New Zealand and benefitted the wider community.



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Celia Hope
March 2013

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1.0: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this project was to research the perceived and observed benefits of a Wintec coordinated community-based ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) literacy programme for migrant and former refugee women, their families and community.

The Wintec Community-Based ESOL Literacy Programme for migrant and former refugee women is a part time Wintec Centre for Languages course held off-campus at Hamilton East School. It is a free course for migrant and former refugee women, who are permanent New Zealand residents and are unable to access English language classes provided on campus or at another institution. The women may also bring their pre-school children to class, where a teacher aide is employed to assist them.

The students learn English language and literacy skills, as well as skills for functioning in the community. They also learn about the ways in which they can support and encourage their children's learning, particularly in their home languages.

As the teacher and designer of the programme's course content since May 2006, I have observed many benefits for the students, their families and communities. I have also observed the ways in which this programme caters for the specific needs of its students. Most of these women would not otherwise be able to attend an English language class due to one or more of the following: limited previous formal education, limited written literacy, a lack of confidence and also family commitments - especially for those who have young children and large families in their care.

As well as my own observations, I had previously surveyed some of the women about the programme. Both my observations and the survey provided the basis for a presentation "Women and pre-schoolers – A Learning Community" delivered at the 2008 Community Languages and English to Speakers of Other Languages (CLESOL) conference.

I had found that because of the limited previous formal education and the level of English language and written literacy experiences of many of the women who attend, it was difficult to assess their progress with the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool (Tertiary Education Commission, 2010a). The Starting Points Assessment Guide (Tertiary Education Commission, 2010b) allowed for greater scope, especially for basic literacy and language skill gains. However I believe that what seemed like small improvements or progress for some attendees were in fact more significant than is reflected in assessment guides. In my view, the programme has far-reaching social and wellbeing benefits for the women, their families and communities beyond the development of their language, literacy, numeracy and learning to learn skills.

Five years after its inception seemed a valuable milestone and an excellent opportunity to examine the effects of the programme, the benefits for the women, their families and communities and the role it plays in providing for women who would not otherwise have access to an English language class¹.

The research question was: What are the self-reported and observed benefits of the Wintec Community- Based ESOL Literacy Programme for migrant and former refugee women?

¹ Research proposal approved by Wintec Ethics Committee on 12 August, 2011.

INTRODUCTION [CONTD]

The objectives of the research were to investigate with the women students, their families and other stakeholders the effectiveness of the programme in:

- 1) Developing the language, literacy, numeracy and learning to learn skills of migrant and former refugee women,
- 2) Developing the confidence and skills of migrant and former refugee women to participate successfully in a new society including accessing further education or employment,
- 3) Encouraging and enhancing the students' participation in their children's education and links with language and literacy in the home,
- 4) Discovering and reporting areas where further development is needed.

Throughout the research I continued in my role as teacher but also undertook the roles of researcher and interviewer. Where applicable in this report I identify the role or perspective I am taking.

In this report when referring to the students who attend or have attended the programme I use either "student/s", "woman/women" or "migrant mothers".

1.2 BACKGROUND OF PROGRAMME

Wintec's Community-based ESOL Literacy Programme for migrant and former refugee women started in 2006 in response to a noted absence of women mothers in Wintec English Language classes. Initially it was proposed to run the programme on campus and provide separate childcare. However, according to one of the participants in this study, the initial proposal was not passed as the childcare provision was problematic.

Hamilton East School staff had noted that because of the multicultural nature of their community many of the mothers of children at the school were learning or wanting to learn English but had little opportunity to attend classes at institutions such as Wintec. Collaboration between the previous Head of Wintec's School of English and the deputy principal at Hamilton East School resulted in the school providing a venue that would be accessible to these mothers especially those with children attending the school. The school also provided a teacher aide to work with the children in the study room alongside the women. This addressed the challenge of early childhood regulations because the parents are present, and also meant a separate space was not required for the children.

In 2006 one class was offered for eight hours spread over three days a week for the duration of twenty weeks (160 hours in total). At first, recruitment of students was slow. In the beginning it was noted that it was "difficult to reach the target group, refugee and migrant mothers, because they generally do not read the newspaper nor listen to the radio for a variety of reasons such as low literacy rates and basically living their lives around their families" (Pak, 2006, p. 6). It was also reported to the School of English Language "that many women may not be permitted to attend the programme, outside of the home, by their husbands" (Pak, 2006, p. 6).

However, as the programme became established, especially towards the end of the first year, more women started to attend. They were finding out about the class mostly by word of mouth: through friends and family, Hamilton East School, English Language Partners, the ESOL assessment and access specialist, Refugee Services, community leaders and my own contacts.

By the end of the first year, 15 students were attending regularly. Because of their diverse backgrounds, English levels and needs, it was decided to apply for funding for two classes of approximately ten students each for 2007. Although it took a few weeks to build up the numbers in the afternoon class, there have been two classes ever since 2007, usually of 10–12 students each, two hours a day, three days a week.

From 2006 to 2009 the programme was funded through TEC's (Tertiary Education Commission) Foundation Learning Pool. However that funding ceased at the end of 2009 but the programme has been able to continue with ILN (Intensive Literacy and Numeracy) funding.

The programme

The learning environment is supportive and not as formal as other Centre for Languages (formerly School of English Language) classes to accommodate women with pre-school children and those who have had little or no previous formal education. The programme is designed to develop learning-to-learn skills, classroom language, English language, literacy and numeracy skills but at the same time is relevant to the women's lives: their children, health, housing, Early Childhood Education and schooling. The students are made aware of school and community activities and are encouraged to participate in them. They are also encouraged to share their skills and knowledge, for example cooking food from their countries and creating recipes, sharing and comparing languages and cultures.

Assessing students' progress

While the programme was funded through the TEC Foundation Learning Pool, the reporting to TEC required an assessment on individual student's progress. As the programme started before the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool (Tertiary Education Commission, 2010a) and the Starting Points Assessment Guide (Tertiary Education Commission, 2010b) had been developed, an assessment level scheme was developed specifically for the programme. The levels for speaking, listening, reading, and writing were established based on observations and a portfolio of the students' work. Since the programme's funding changed to ILN (Intensive Literacy and Numeracy) in 2010, assessments have been done using the Starting Points Assessment Guide. At the time of this research project, the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool had not been administered to any of the students. However a small group of the students have now moved beyond Starting Points and have attempted the Assessment Tool.

As the teacher, I have also continued to use observation and portfolios as methods of assessing progress. This allows me to adjust materials and my teaching approach as necessary.

INTRODUCTION [CONTD]

1.3 STUDENTS' BACKGROUNDS

Since the programme has been operating, the ages of the women have ranged from 18 to 70 years plus. The women come from a range of countries. In 2011, there were students from Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Colombia, Cambodia, India and China. Students from Somalia represent about two thirds of the group. In the past there have also been students from Morocco, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran, Iraq, Kurdistan, Afghanistan, Thailand, Japan and Fiji. At least two thirds of the women attending these classes have come to New Zealand as UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) refugees or through family reunification. Many have experienced trauma and may continue to do so especially if they have had to leave family members behind in refugee camps or in countries experiencing stressful conditions due to war.

As well as the traumatic stress that many of the women experience, most will experience the stresses of migration and acculturation (Benseman, 2012). Even those who came as migrants may not have come to New Zealand by choice and will have left behind family and friends, the support system that they need when learning a new language and adapting to a new culture.

Few of the women have had formal education in their own countries and many come from oral language traditions. Therefore, approaching written language is unfamiliar and highly challenging. As Field and Sellars (2009, p. 136) state, it involves "a major shift in thinking and in ways of perceiving the world".

Although most of the women have pre-school and/or school-age children, a few are also grandmothers. Most of those who are grandmothers still care for school-age children.

1.4 RELEVANT LITERATURE

An extensive literature review was outside the scope of this study. However I have referred to two recent and relevant local studies (Benseman, 2012; Furness, 2011a, 2011b) which relate to the backgrounds, needs and progress of beginning literacy learners. Both these studies identify benefits that an effective programme can provide beyond literacy and numeracy gains.

Benseman's (2012, p. 26) report concludes that although these learners come with many skills, they are "not well recognised in a New Zealand context" and "they lack the 'learning blocks' necessary to facilitate learning that most learners acquire as school-children and take for granted as adult learners". His findings suggested that because of these factors, progress is extremely slow in learning the new language. He concluded that adult refugee learners with limited literacy would usually require "in excess of 500 hours of tuition to achieve significant results" (2012, p. 29)

Benseman (2012) identifies four components: learning skills, English and literacy skills, self-confidence and understanding life in New Zealand, that are inextricably linked so that gains in one area contribute to gains in the others. He likens it to a "wheel of progress" which "is extremely difficult to turn initially, but can gain momentum with skilful exertion on the four components" (2012, p. 26)

In an eighteen month study, Furness (2011a, 2011b) followed adult participants of three different family literacy programmes to explore what contribution their participation had on their wellbeing, as well as to that of their families and community. She concluded that the effects of the programmes were multi-faceted and went beyond gaining literacy knowledge and skills. Furness (2011a, p. 270) identified six categories of effects as shown in the following diagram and determined that these effects were all interconnected as well as highly personalised.

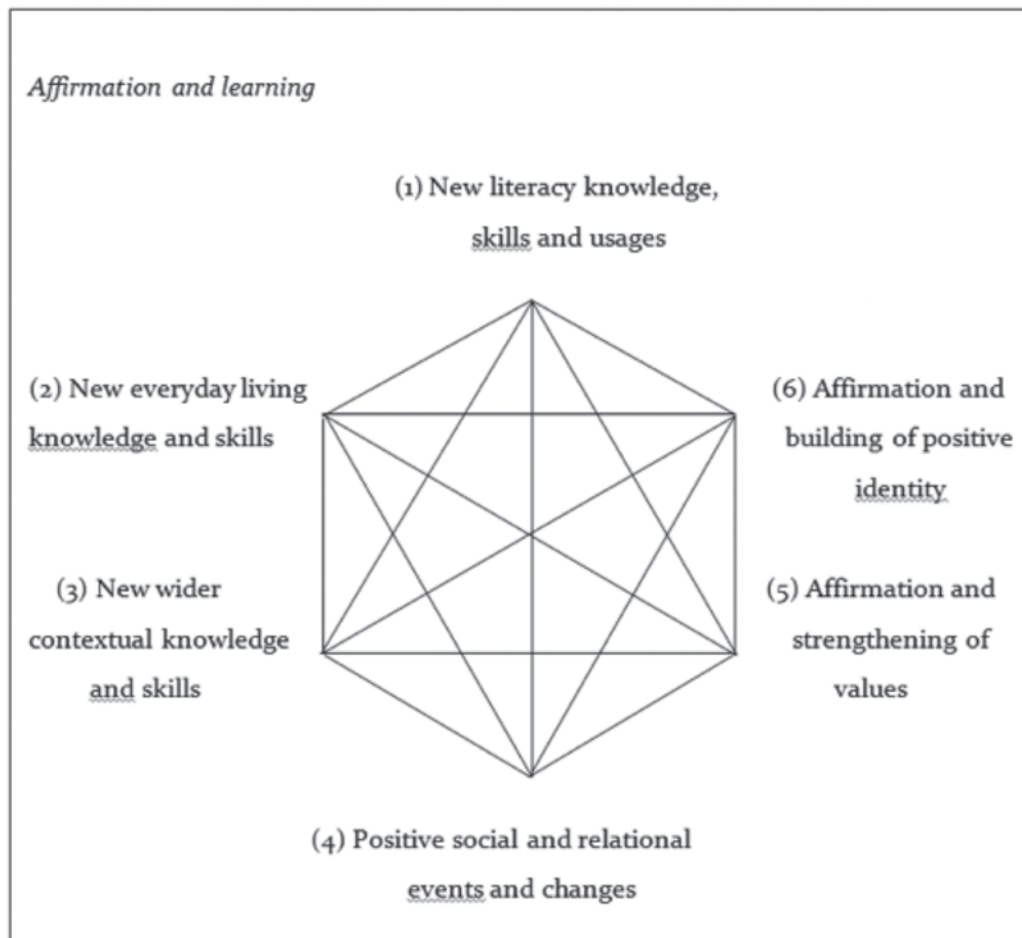


Figure 1: “Interconnectedness of categories of programme effects in four family-focused literacy programmes” (from Furness (2011a, p. 253))

She acknowledged that “people have complex and often difficult lives” and determined that there are: “wide-ranging and far-reaching benefits accrue[d] from family approaches (literacy, social, relational, wellbeing); over time and space, literacy is only part of what is wanted and needed and literacy content is only part of the programme” (2011b, p. 26)

She also concluded that the benefits of participation in an effective and relevant programme had a positive flow-on effect to the students’ families and community and that “there is a tangible, discernible process from participation to wellbeing in which literacy is more or less involved”(2011b, p. 26).

Both studies also confirmed that an effective programme is one that has a welcoming and supportive environment with relevant and meaningful content. Teachers who have an awareness of the students’ backgrounds and understand their needs. , along with the skills and strategies to deliver the content effectively, are essential or pivotal to the effectiveness of the programme (Benseman, 2012; Furness, 2011a).

INTRODUCTION [CONTD]

1.5 OTHER SIMILAR PROGRAMMES

As far as I am aware there are no other multi-level community based ESOL literacy classes in Aotearoa/New Zealand solely for women from migrant and refugee backgrounds which also cater for pre-school children in the classroom alongside the women. However I am aware of the following programmes which cater for migrant and former refugee women with similar components:

- **English Language Partners ESOL Literacy classes:** These classes are held in eight centres including Hamilton for New Zealand permanent residents who have had nine or fewer years at school. They are for 8-10 hours a week with qualified teachers and bilingual tutors. In some of these classes young children are often present as appropriate childcare is not available (Jo de Lisle, Manager, English Language Partners Waikato, personal communication 22 January, 2013.)
- **Adult ESOL , Victory School, Nelson:** Two classes operate concurrently for about 32 former refugee women, for three hours, three mornings per week. Both classes are multi-level (pre-literate to intermediate). Childcare is provided in an adjoining room. There are two ESOL teachers, three childcare workers and usually two volunteers per session either helping in the English class or with the childcare (Diane Homer, Teacher, Adult ESOL, Victory School, Nelson, personal communication January, 2013).
- **Shama Ethnic Women's Centre Trust, Hamilton:** Offer a variety of services and programmes for ethnic and migrant women including English language, cooking, sewing and craft classes, a parent support and playgroup, computer training, a school holiday programme, an after-school education support service for children from refugee families, and social services provided by a dedicated on-site social worker. They also provide childcare while women attend sessions. The English language classes are usually for two hours per week during each school term (www.trustwaikato.co.nz; <http://ketehamilton.peoplesnetworknz.info/>)
- **Selwyn College REAF (Refugee Education for Adults and Families) programme:** Runs two parallel groups (A and B) each having five classes from pre-literate to intermediate levels for 12.5 hours per week. The students learn practical ESOL and resettlement skills and childcare is available on site. It is especially supportive of former refugee women (www.selwyn.school.nz).

2.0: PARTICIPANTS AND PROCESS

2.1 APPROACH

The research required an approach that could determine the benefits from the women's perspectives as well as those observed by others. More than one method was used for eliciting information and viewpoints from the women and from stakeholders who had knowledge of the students, the programme or both. The methods used included:

- questionnaires with students (see Appendix A: 1 and 2),
- interviews with students, family members and other stakeholders (see Appendix B: 1-4) and
- direct observations.

My observations were recorded incidentally as they arose, through note-taking, check lists or as part of assessment tasks.



2.2 PARTICIPANTS

In total, thirteen current and five former students, two family members and ten stakeholders in the community participated in the research project.

Current students:

At the beginning of the study twenty three students from the following countries of origin were attending the classes; Somalia (13), Ethiopia (1), Djibouti (1), India (2), China (3), Colombia (2), Cambodia (1). Of these students, seventeen came as UNHCR refugees or through family reunification, the other six as migrants. However for a number of reasons it wasn't possible to interview all of the students, the main one being attendance at the time of setting up the interviews. Some of the students had taken a break from the class due to health, family commitments or work.

The thirteen students who were interviewed were from the following countries; Somalia (8), Ethiopia (1), Djibouti (1), India (1), China (2).

Former students:

The five former students interviewed or surveyed were from Thailand (1), Republic of Congo (1), Cambodia (1), China (1) and Korea (1).

Family members:

Members of two families who had good levels of English were interviewed; one had been an interpreter and the other was studying at University. The two family members were the husband of a student and the oldest son residing in New Zealand of another student.

Other stakeholders in the community:

Ten key stakeholders were invited to participate as they either personally, or through the organisation for which they work, had knowledge of or some involvement with one or more of the students, the programme or both. (See Appendix F for information about stakeholders' relationships with the programme and students.)

2.0: PARTICIPANTS AND PROCESS [CONTD]

2.3 DATA COLLECTION

A questionnaire was developed for the student participants to complete. This questionnaire was designed to gather background information for profiles of the students; their countries of origin, length of time of residence in Aotearoa/New Zealand, length of time attending this class, previous education, language learning and use and the number of children they have. They were also asked to identify at what stage of schooling their children were. The students were given assistance with the questionnaire by me or the teacher aide as required (see Appendix A1 and A2).

Interview questions

The interviews took a semi-structured approach. This approach entailed developing a set of questions in order to elicit the participants' perceptions and/or observations of the benefits of attending this programme for the women, their families and communities (Robert Wood Foundation, 2008).

The questions covered:

- 1) Opening thoughts about whether the programme had helped with settlement and life in Aotearoa/New Zealand,
- 2) Language, literacy, numeracy and learning to learn skills,
- 3) Social and community participation skills, including accessing further education or employment,
- 4) Participation in children's education, and links with language and literacy in the home,
- 5) Recommendations to other women of ways in which the programme caters for this specific group of students,
- 6) Hopes and goals for the women and their families, and
- 7) Areas necessitating further development.

The questions were slightly different for the four different groups of participants (current students, former students, family members and other stakeholders), (see Appendix B: 1- 4). Only two questions were prepared for the interviews with stakeholders from the community, the first to establish the background of their relationship and knowledge of the students and the programme, and the second allowing for comment and examples for the areas outlined above. The family members' questions were slightly different to reflect how they perceived the class helped them and their family. They were also asked about their hopes and goals for their family.

Some of the questions I had prepared for the women were similar but designed to allow for probing or for elaboration of a point. Therefore not all questions were necessarily asked. The interviews varied in length but most took approximately 30 minutes.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were then coded and thematically analysed.

² The teacher aide employed to work primarily with the children is Somali and so she sometimes assisted me in communicating with the women by interpreting in Somali and English.

2.4 PROCESS

The students (current and former) were told about the research project and the objectives prior to the interview and invited to participate. The current students were also given a “Participant information sheet” prior to participation which could be taken home to discuss with their families (see Appendix C). During another class prior to the interviews they were given a further sheet of “Information and Interview questions for Students”, to take home (see Appendix D). All the students approached were willing to participate.

The questionnaire and interview questions were piloted with two former students to gauge whether the questions would yield the type of data required. At this stage none of the questions were modified however towards the end of the interview cycle I included additional questions to elicit how the students felt when they first came to New Zealand and to the class and how they felt now. Some students had already alluded to this without having a question that specifically asked about it (see Appendix B: 1-2 for the interview questions).

The interviews with current students were conducted with the assistance of a professional interpreter although many answered some of the questions in English for themselves. The interpreters also went over the participant information sheet and consent form at the beginning of the interviews in the student’s first language.

Interpreters were used to allow better understanding and clarification of the questions and to help the participants respond with more depth than if they were confined to the use of English due to language constraints. These interviews took place during class times and were conducted in a separate room.

The interviews with former students, family members and other stakeholders were conducted at a place that was convenient for them and outside class times (see Appendix B: 3 - 4.) Two of the former students no longer lived in Hamilton so answered both the questionnaire and the interview questions by e-mail.

When the interview transcriptions were collated and analysed various themes were identified. These themes were then grouped according to the areas identified in the objectives of the research project as well as other benefits and reasons why this class helped the students or could help other women in their community.

2.0: PARTICIPANTS AND PROCESS [CONTD]

2.5 CHALLENGES, LIMITATIONS AND ADVANTAGES

The interviews were conducted by me, and as teacher and interviewer, I already knew the women and many of the stakeholders well. One possible limitation could have been that students gave answers that they thought I would want. Or, they may have withheld if they felt their response would be inappropriate, for example if they felt critical of the programme or of my teaching. It may have helped to create some distance between me as the researcher and the students so the students didn't feel they had to respond to a question in a particular manner (e.g. give the answer they perceived I would expect or want). However, because of my relationship with the students, I felt they would actually be more comfortable and likely to speak more honestly and openly than if I had used an interviewer they did not know.

Because of the longstanding teacher-student relationship, it is possible that as interviewer I could lead the interviewee to a particular response. I was aware of this possibility ahead of time so structured the questions and the order of questions, to avoid this happening as much as possible.

Before commencing the study I was aware of the limitations of the approach taken due to my close relationship with the women and the programme. However it seemed these were outweighed by the advantages which related to the comfort levels for all involved. The women were more likely to understand the questions asked and if they responded in English, I was able to understand or seek clarification appropriately as I was aware of their English language ability and the need to adjust my language accordingly.

Through my involvement as teacher, I have been able to observe the women's progress and benefits of

attending the class. This close involvement enhances the internal validity of this research (Nunan, 1992). Since my observations were noted incidentally as a result of interactions during or outside of class time (for example phone calls from students), or from collecting some of their work, it did not interrupt or alter the class routines or behaviours being observed. I also had the opportunity for continual data collection and analysis. These observations spanned the period of time I have been teaching the programme.

Because of my role as teacher, the time I have spent in the setting and the knowledge I have of the participants, I have been able to take a participant or insider perspective as a researcher. I have been able to observe the reality of life and experiences of the student participants, and therefore "gain[ed] an insider's perspective on events, actions and attitudes" (Field, 2012, p. 59).

Another possible limitation to the study related to the cross section of women who participated. With a student group such as this, it is very difficult to plan far ahead as attendance can fluctuate dramatically from session to session. The women's attendance was determined by their own and their children's health, appointments (e.g. health and social agencies³;) and transport. Hence it was difficult to determine a suitable day to book an interpreter (and a reliever). Since approximately two thirds of the current students in the programme were Somali, I could be confident when arranging for an interpreter for this group that there would be sufficient numbers attending on that specific day. As a result it meant that there was a strong representation of this group in the study. However because of absences of women from other ethnicities it was difficult to determine a suitable time for an interview with them and book an interpreter therefore it wasn't possible to include the

³ Appointments with agencies such as Housing New Zealand or Work and Income New Zealand are sometimes during class time, or with no specified time on a given day, so women had to stay home and miss class.

current Colombian and Cambodian students in the study. However the five former students were from countries other than Somalia, including one student from Cambodia.

While the original intention had been to survey or interview more family members, in the end this aim was limited by time and logistics as most husbands were working and for many it would also mean using an interpreter for the interview and translator for the survey questionnaire.

Although using interpreters allowed for better understanding of the interview questions and responses and therefore gathering more information and opinions than would otherwise been possible, some concepts were still difficult to explain and explore. For example most of the women seemed to understand the concept of hopes and goals and most responded with hopes for themselves and their families. However few were able to respond in terms of how the class may have affected their hopes or plans. This may have been because of language and cultural differences or not having explicit goals when they started the class, or both. Also many, especially those from refugee backgrounds, may have been existing on a day to day basis rather than looking further ahead.

Some of the students did not respond to the question regarding what more they would like to learn in the class, or what could be done differently or better. Again a Western cultural expectation of evaluation may have been inappropriate. To the question *“Are there things that we might do better or differently?”* one student’s response was, *“I’m a student. That’s your decision. ... You know better for us what kind of study, what we can do.”*

Interpreting the prepared questions was not always straight forward for the interpreters. It depended somewhat on their language, culture and style of communication. For example, the Hindi interpreter found the questions were sometimes too long and asked for a more concise version. He explained that the order of the information or words in the sentence or question in Hindi was almost back to front with English, so he needed to listen to the whole question before interpreting and sometimes he found it difficult to keep the thread. Breaking the question into parts was helpful for some of the interpreters, but not for translating into Hindi.

The interview questions failed to elicit information regarding the students’ perception of whether the programme supported and promoted the use of their home languages with their children. However my observations clearly confirmed that the women gained confidence and motivation to encourage their children in their home languages, as reported in the findings.



3.0: FINDINGS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The data was collated, transcribed and analysed and summarised in the following sections according to the original objectives and additional themes I identified.

The first section profiles the current and former students who participated in the study. This helps to build a picture of the backgrounds and current contexts of the women who attend the programme.

The second section summarises the benefits of attending the class as perceived by the women and their reasons for choosing the class or recommending it to other women in their community. It also summarises their hopes or plans for the future and how they see that the class may help them and constraints that they have identified.

The third section summarises the responses from the key stakeholders and family members, the benefits they observed for the women, families and community, and the ways in which this programme caters specifically for this group of students. It also includes the hopes and goals of family members and constraints these two groups have identified.

My observations are added throughout.

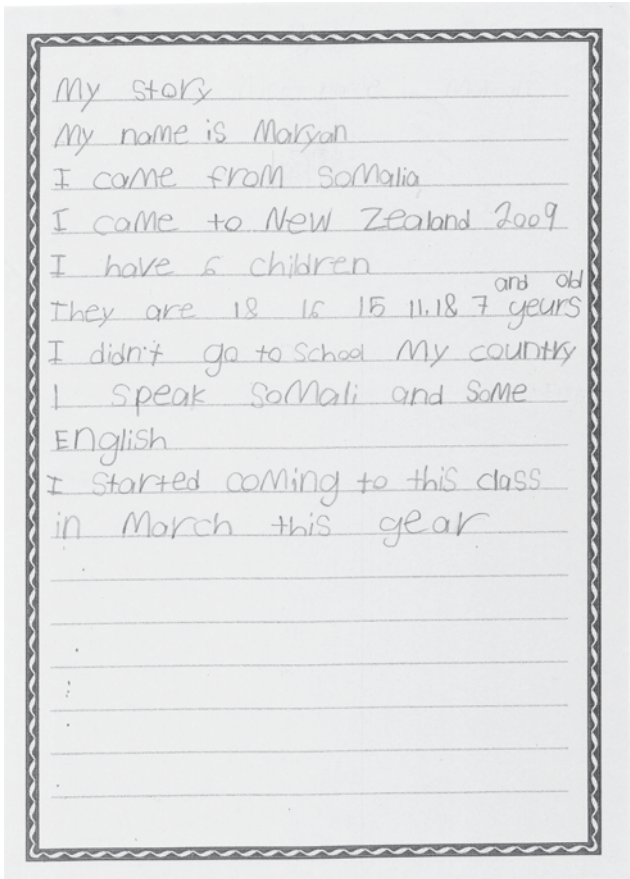
3.2 STUDENTS' PROFILES

Countries of Origin:

The eighteen current and former students who were interviewed are from the following countries: Somalia (8), China (3), India (1), Ethiopia (1), Djibouti (1), Cambodia (1), Korea (1), Thailand (1) and Republic of Congo (1).

Children:

All except two of the student participants have children (see Table 1) and thirteen of the women have brought or still bring one or more preschool children to class with them. Of the sixteen women who have children, five have children attending an early childhood centre, thirteen have children attending primary or middle school, nine have children attending secondary school and offspring of seven of the women are studying at a tertiary institute or working. Of these at least five of the children are studying at University.



3.0: FINDINGS [CONTD]

Table 1: Number of children per student

Number of children	Number of women (students)
0*	2
1	2
2	6
5	1
6	2
8	1
9	1
10	1
13	1
15	1
Average number of children	5.4

Table 2: Education level of migrant women's children

	Number of women
Bring or brought pre-school children to class	13*
Have pre-school children now	5**
Have or have had children attend an ECE Centre	11
Have children attending primary or middle school	13
Have children attending secondary school	9
Have children attending a tertiary institute, training or working	7
Children attending Hamilton East School (primary school) – past or now	4 (+ 1 probably in 2012)

ECE Centre = Early Childhood Education Centre (Childcare Centre or Kindergarten)

* One of the women only brings her pre-school child occasionally as her husband looks after the child most of the time while she attends the class.

One of the women brought her grandson as she was caring for him until his mother was able to get residence/ come from Africa.

** Two of these women are former students.

Length of time of residence in Aotearoa/New Zealand

Of the women participating in the study, half have lived in Aotearoa/New Zealand for eight or fewer years, the other half eight to seventeen years with the average length of residence 7.5 years.

Length of time of attendance in programme

Fourteen of the student participants have attended the class for two years or less and of those fourteen, eight have attended the class for 1.5 to two years. Of the four who have attended for longer, three have had some disruptions in their attendance due to family commitments (another pregnancy and/ or a large family). Three of these four have also had little or no previous formal education and had never learned to read or write in their first language.

Participants' previous education, literacy and languages

Many of the migrant women have had little or no formal education. Only seven have completed high school but of those, five had attended a tertiary institute before coming here, either for vocational training or university study. Three have Bachelor degrees.

Table 3: Migrant and former refugee women's previous education

Previous formal education	Number of women
Never been to school	6
4 years	1
8 – 10 years	4
Completed High School	7
Further education (e.g. vocational course, University degree)	5

Although the majority of the women had learned to read or write in their first or other language, just over one third of them (7) had not.

"I never used to go to school. No good at writing in Somali – everything I have written [is] my name, before I never knew that but because of this class I am halfway through all this. [In] Somali no school, [I was a] housewife. Here now I am really good."

"I never learn from my country. I never learned through our country, so first time is here that's why when I get a headache I just forget to write everything."

All of the students are bilingual or becoming bilingual in their own language and English and three of the women know several languages especially languages of their former communities. Although not indicated in the answers to the questionnaire most of the Somali women know some Arabic, as they recite it from the Qur'an, and some speak a little Swahili, which they learned in the refugee camp in Kenya.

3.0: FINDINGS [CONTD]

Table 4: Migrant and former refugee women’s language and literacy

	Yes	NO
Learned to read/ write in L1 or another language	11	7
Attended an English language class previously (in NZ)	8 +1*	9
Attended another English language class between or after this one	4	-
Languages other than English – L1 only	14	-
Languages other than English – L1 and another	1	-
Languages other than English – L1 and 2 or more others	3	-

L1 = first language

* One woman attended a floral art night class conducted in English.

Although the women were not asked about the length of time they attended an English class most either said or implied that it was for a short time, probably less than a year. Most of these women stopped going to the other class because they had a baby, they had family commitments or they could not take or find care for their pre-school children. In one case the class had closed.

Since leaving the “Migrant Mothers” class four of the former students have gone on to other English language and/ or employment skills classes. One of these women also came back to the “Migrant Mothers” class after having her last baby, as finding childcare and managing a family and a full time class were too difficult. The other former student left the class as she had found employment. As a teacher I am aware of other students who have left for employment or to continue their education.

Recruitment

Of the eighteen women, only one read about the class through an advertisement. This is not surprising since potential students are unlikely to have the English language and literacy skills required for this task. Most heard about it through more informal channels especially from friends and relations who were already attending the programme. Usually the initial enquiry regarding vacancies has been made by the friend, relative or service, e.g. Refugee Services, English Language Partners or ESOL Advisor (refer Appendix E).

4.0: MIGRANT AND FORMER REFUGEE WOMEN'S VIEWS OF THE PROGRAMME

The opening question asked whether coming to this class had helped the students with their settlement and life in Aotearoa/New Zealand. All agreed that it had.

"First time when I arrived into New Zealand I can't even write my name. I couldn't speak English, there was no other Somali that could show around me so hopefully in my future me and my kids we will just get a better life and continue with our life".

The following table summarises their responses to that question.

Table 5: Reports of programme helping with settlement and life in New Zealand

	Number of responses
It helped / is helping me (very much)	7
Yes (Celia)*	3
A lot of things have changed for me	2
This class is good for me/really good class	2
(Yes), to improve my English	1
I like it very much	1
Now I'm better	1
I can learn English	1

* One of these three women added my name and continued to say how much she appreciated me as a teacher. She thanked me continually during the interview.

"Yes, this class helped me because it was very difficult when we arrived here. I didn't know anything in English. I didn't know how to speak, how to listen to people but when I started to come in your class it was very hard but after 2-3 months it was good for me. I can write, I can listen, and I will just keep going."

This student started the class in 2006 and is now studying at Intermediate level at the Centre for Languages, Wintec.

Others commented about how they felt when they had just arrived here and/or when they first started coming to the class:

"At that time I [didn't] understand. Understand just so much, yeah. I [didn't] know what you [said]. I ask[ed] some peoples sit[ting] beside me, I said "what [did] she say?" They explain[ed] for me. And when asked about living in New Zealand: "Oh very hard. Like very hard. Yeah. Now it's very good."

One student had only been attending for 3 weeks at the time of the interview:

"I know I am here for three weeks but ... (a) lot of things have been changed for me. The class it's really good. (Before) my spelling is very low ... Yes it's a good help for me. I can talk but it did help a lot (with) spelling."

4.0: MIGRANT AND FORMER REFUGEE WOMEN'S VIEWS OF THE PROGRAMME [CONTD]

Students gave further details about specific benefits of the programme:

- Development of language, literacy, numeracy and learning to learn skills
- Increased participation in society including accessing further education or employment
- Increased participation in children's education and links with language and literacy in the home
- Other benefits the programme provides or has provided students, their families and communities
- Programme's value to migrant and former refugee women

These are outlined in the following sections.

4.1 LANGUAGE, LITERACY, NUMERACY AND LEARNING TO LEARN SKILLS

All the women felt that they had made gains in some or all of the skill areas; language, literacy, numeracy and learning to learn skills, as a result of attending classes. Improvements in writing, speaking and reading were the most mentioned benefits named by over half the women. Understanding/ listening were also frequently mentioned.

It is worth noting that the language production skills – writing and speaking were the most mentioned benefits of the class.

Table 6: Benefits to language, literacy, numeracy and learning to learn skills

Perceived gains in skills and/or knowledge	Number of responses
Writing	12
Speaking	10
Reading	9
Understanding/ listening	7
Vocabulary	4
Spelling	3
Conversations	2
Handwriting	1
Grammar	1
Practise English	1
Things I didn't know before	1



"It helped me to talk English very, very good. I can't talk very well when first time I came here and I try to study and talk with the teacher. And now I am better."

"writing name, NZ names, a lot of things I didn't know before"

"Now I can understand [a] bit more and I can speak [a] bit better. When teachers speak I can understand them [a] lot better now. ...With the reading and writing it's [a] bit more difficult."

This student implied that reading and writing were still difficult for her which isn't surprising as she had never learned to read or write in her first language so she is just beginning. However, I interpreted from her next comment that she felt she had made a little progress with reading.

"On reading when I read that's the only time I can understand [a] wee bit."

4.2 PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY INCLUDING ACCESSING FURTHER EDUCATION OR EMPLOYMENT

As well as their perceived gains in skills and knowledge, the women gave examples of improved communication, skills and confidence that helped them participate more fully in the host society.

Table 6: Benefits to language, literacy, numeracy and learning to learn skills

Perceived benefits of programme	Number of responses
Speaking with the doctor	11*
Shopping, including banking, putting petrol in car	9
Communicating with employees of Government departments	7*
Using the phone	6
General confidence and skills	5
Talking to neighbours, participating more in the host community	3
At work	2

*A few women felt they were more able to do parts of these tasks but still needed help with other parts (e.g. see students' comments in "Communicating with employees of Government departments" below.)

"I thought [living in NZ] would get harder [when I left the class] because I realised what my English level was like but I felt confident at the same time because I knew only if I try there are many kind people like our teacher to help me."

*"A lot of things, my change through from my life, from now on I am changed.
.....Yeah I can do a lot of things. I can put petrol in, go to the Pak & Save, while they're [children] not around me and I can do a lot of things by myself."*

4.0: MIGRANT AND FORMER REFUGEE WOMEN'S VIEWS OF THE PROGRAMME [CONTD]

Speaking with the doctor

Most of the women reported that as a result of attending the class they felt less reliant on another family member, friend or interpreter and more confident when speaking with the doctor, other health professionals or services.

"It helped me to go to see the family doctor, how to make an appointment, how to talk with family doctor."

"Yeah before I took H (husband) with me, he [spoke] for me and sometime[s] my daughter." When asked how it feels now she can do it for herself: "I'm very happy, yeah."

Another student felt she was more able to understand and speak English to other people and felt that would extend to talking to the doctor in the future:

"... also when I talk with someone I can answer the question. ...Yes, helping me. In the future job, doctor, whatever".

Shopping, including banking, putting petrol in car

Half of the women felt that they were now more able to go shopping and do similar tasks. The following response is from a woman who didn't know any English at all when she started the class and she was also quite isolated because of family commitments. She had never been to school or learnt to read or write so being able to do shopping on her own is a huge step for her, although she is still reliant on someone driving her to the supermarket.

"Yes. Example when I am at shopping I can do it myself, I can pay everything myself. Hopefully if I go to the "Pak 'n' Save" I can do how much the money and I understand how much everything is. I can repeat it. I can do it by myself every time."

Communicating with employees of Government departments

Two of the women felt more able to communicate with Housing New Zealand staff when they visited their homes especially to explain that something wasn't working properly. However they didn't feel confident yet to phone the agency or go to the agency without support of their husband, a friend or another family member.

"..... Last month, a woman she came to my house. She check all house. I said the shower doesn't have power. So she send me after three days the man to fix it."

*"Housing New Zealand, I didn't visit them yet but when they come to the house **I can talk to them a little bit and say come in, and just ask something.** But Work and Income, no.... Housing, they come to my house. If anything wrong with the house I can say."
(emphasis added)*

Another said she sometimes went to talk to her case manager at WINZ on her own but sometimes she needed to take someone with her:

*"Sometimes I might go by myself. Sometimes if I am not happy so just take someone along just in case. **It's better for me to talk in English.**" **(emphasis added)***

Using the phone, making appointments

The following example is my observation made to one of the women about her increased confidence in using the telephone:

"You have come a long way with your speaking, I know because now you can telephone me and you can understand me and I can understand you."

Another woman considered that she did not use the phone much, and yet reported that she was able to have a conversation with her doctor on the phone.

"Sometimes, yeah. Not a lot. Yeah sometime I call for my doctor, to make appointment."

Talking to neighbours, participating more in the host community

One woman who had been in New Zealand more than ten years said: "... my Kiwi friends they understand what I am speaking so that's good." Another who had been here less than two years said: "Yes I can also understand little bits from the neighbours."

Communicating with people at work

A former student now in work, and a current student who does seasonal work, commented that they were more able to communicate at work as a result of attending this class.

"...and I can talk to people when I'm working."

"Yes, can practise first at the class. Talk to the Kiwi, the accent is different, very different. The first thing I can say, how to say? say hello, say hi and ask them and have conversation, to start."

The women's responses showed how important it was for them to be able to communicate independently in the community especially communication necessary for their own and their families' wellbeing; such as speaking to the doctor, shopping, banking and communicating with government agencies. Most of the women felt that they could now communicate in one or more of these situations more independently.

4.3 Participation in children's education

I perceived three themes in the women's responses that related to their participation in their children's education and links with language and literacy in the home. Most of the women (14 out of the 16 with children) felt that the class had helped to increase or enhance their participation in their children's education in some way.

Table 8: Benefits to migrant women's participation in children's education

Perceived benefits of programme	Number of responses
Participation in children's education and ECE provisions for their children	11
Understand more about children's education	8
Help children with learning	5

ECE = Early Childhood Education

4.0: MIGRANT AND FORMER REFUGEE WOMEN'S VIEWS OF THE PROGRAMME [CONTD]

One student had experienced a communication difficulty with the school staff shortly after she started coming to the class, and then reported a change:

*"I didn't talk to my kids teacher, so that's one good thing that did help me out. **I can talk to my kids' teachers [now]" (emphasis added)***

Many felt they now knew more about their children's education or could help their children more with their learning or both. The same student said:

"It's good when they [the children] come back home I can know what kind of homework they have, so I can read, I can help them out so that way don't have to be sitting at home, lazy – I can push them to read and write. I can help them out too. ... When they come home from school I just push and say bring me your homework, I need to write it down. I forget [to do my] homework, you know I will end up coming to the class, it's like 'oh no'! Thank you so much."

One of the women who had never been to school commented:

*"They [my children] help me more actually at home but because of this class or study sometimes I let them know as well. **This is how it should be and this is due to this class.**" (emphasis added)*

However many also felt they wanted to know more about how their children were doing at school and how they could help them. It seemed that sometimes they were told that their children are fine but the women wanted to know more than this. They wanted to know that their children are doing well, what they need help with and how they might help them.

Following is a conversation with one of the women about this:

Student: "My children, some little ones maybe high class, some slow class. Meeting the teacher, Teacher parents meeting."

Interviewer: "Yes. So you want to know how your children are doing at school?"

Student: "How are you my daughter? How are you my son?"

Interviewer: "And do you think this class is helping with that?"

Student: "Yes. A little bit I can talk more."

Interviewer: "But you would like to know more?"

Student: "Yeah, I would like to know more. Yeah."

Some of the women who had brought their pre-school children to class also felt that it was beneficial for their social development and readiness for school as well as getting information about services:

"Yes. We talked about childcare centres and Plunket."

"Yes, very helpful. Because when he play[s], he can listen when we talk about and when you [are] teaching. Like I start a, b, c, d – he knows. ... And when he went to start to school, he can start. Hard to explain, you understand."

(My interpretation is that this student feels her son was more prepared for starting school after coming to the class with her.)

4.4 MAINTENANCE OF MOTHER TONGUE

Many of the women talked about the importance of using and encouraging the use of their mother tongue with their children. Maintaining home languages was often an area of discussion in the class, as were the challenges presented when their children’s English was better than theirs. Many of the women said their children preferred to use English at home and did not understand the value of their mother tongue. Some were concerned that their children cannot read or write in their mother tongue and that there were few opportunities for this learning to take place, especially if the mothers have not learned to read and write themselves. Some of those who were able to read and write in their own language encouraged and even taught their children their written language.

Together with my encouragement and suggestions, other students contributed ideas regarding the status, importance and challenges of maintaining and promoting their languages. One story has been created in class so far in a home language (Somali), and this is an area for further development.

4.5 OTHER BENEFITS TO MIGRANT/REFUGEE WOMEN, THEIR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Additional perceived benefits were grouped according to the areas identified in the research objectives. Many of the women described their feelings of isolation, boredom and frustration that they couldn’t learn English until they started coming to the class. As a result of the class, they made friends and this led to greater happiness. I have observed these friendships develop and the support the women gave each other in and out of class.



Table 9: Other benefits to migrant women, their families and communities

Other benefits	Number of responses
Reduced isolation, made connections, developed friendships	9
Pathway to other education, work, etc.	4
Increased happiness	4
Encourages lifelong learning	2
Gained information about services and culture	2

“[Before] I felt very bored due to language limitation.”

“Yes, yes of course, because if I stay at home I can’t do anything. I have to go out, and meet some people or out or go to school. At home I can’t learn anything because I have the children here, just cleaning house or cooking,

blah blah blah, but when I go to talk with other people you look like meet something new or talking with people they tell you something new what you can do.”

“Helped to meet other women, communicate with people, get out of the house, better than staying at home [for]me & my son.”

4.0: MIGRANT AND FORMER REFUGEE WOMEN'S VIEWS OF THE PROGRAMME [CONTD]

"Making friends to mix with."

"OK (living in NZ) but this class is 100% better for me to stay home is boring," ...Now very very happy. ... thank you very much, you and A."

Some, especially former students, commented how the class and the teacher had helped them on their pathway to other education or work, and to access information about other services and culture.

"When I finished this class it was you C to help me to enrol at Wintec and to start to do elementary TOPS class which was very good for me."

"Getting more information for settlement such as organisations, people, education courses. ... Greetings, we could learn how to greet people and it helped me a lot. For example we often practiced the conversation below after the holiday. ... We learnt how to say when we meet people who we know they have been sick. It happened often to us!"

Although not always stated, many implied that this class had opened the door for lifelong learning.

"Thank you. I try my best to be reading and writing, and learn more and read more, so that way I can make my teacher happy. She makes me happy. No from now on I'm going to go forward, I'm not going to go backward."

4.6 PROGRAMME FEATURES OF VALUE TO MIGRANT AND FORMER REFUGEE WOMEN

Many of the women mentioned particular features of the programme as their reasons for attending class. The most frequent reasons they gave for continuing to come to the class and/or recommending it to others were to do with their perception of the quality of the programme (the teacher and the environment). However for most of the women their reasons included one or more of the practical aspects; accessibility, location, flexibility, hours and the ability to bring their pre-school children.



Table 10: Programme features of value to migrant and former refugee women

Valued Programme features	Number of responses	
Good programme/ class, supportive learning environment, including experienced / good teacher	15	<p><i>"Other classes, the teachers are talking fast but here you teaching me really slow and making me to learn more. And I will understand everything you will say while I won't understand the other teachers."</i></p> <p><i>"I choose this school, I thought this is a school from where I can study from the level where I am."</i></p>
Part time & hours suit	8	<p><i>"Good timing, when I drop off to school for kids and come home and do my cleaning, I can come to class. It's good timing. I can reach it by the other ones lunch time and I can cook lunch for the other one. It's a good class."</i></p> <p><i>"For me the six hours per week is enough. I cannot do more than that."</i></p>
Can bring pre-school children	5	<p><i>"The women come to the class with their children but when we study we stay out of [away from] children because someone's there looking for our children. It's very good because we see if there is something up with our kids we know and this person for me also was a very good person, I remember T, she was very good. She was looking very good for the kids."</i></p>
Proximity/ accessibility	4	<p><i>"Near my house, convenient especially as pregnant, then had baby and no car/ licence."</i></p>
Flexibility – (e.g. women can have a break from the class)	3	<p><i>"Yes I had two breaks from this class. The first break was for B when I was pregnant, and after B was born I came back this class. It was for B with A, after that A went to primary school and I was coming just with B but then I became pregnant again and I had C. I started to come in your class again with B and C ... "</i></p>
Pre-school children benefit/ learn too	2	<p><i>"My son could play with other children"</i></p>
Have children attending Hamilton East School	2	<p><i>"My son's studying here and also near my home."</i></p>
Free	2	<p><i>"Good example of free child care, of free learning, a good child care, good timing for me, since I'm a home-stayer for other little kids."</i></p>
Mix of cultures/learn about other cultures	1	<p><i>"Yes, definitely and New Zealand is the immigrant country so I need to mix with different friends, Somalia, India, Columbia, and Korea. I want to know the different country culture. It's good for me."</i></p>

4.0: MIGRANT AND FORMER REFUGEE WOMEN'S VIEWS OF THE PROGRAMME [CONTD]

All of those who responded to the question about recommending the class to other women in their community said they would.

"Yeah I would like to tell more of my Somalian groups it's a good class to come. I tell because I got a good opportunity from this class, I know you guys will get something better from it. We tell it's a good teacher there."

A student who had returned after a break said:
"I came back because I wanted to learn."

Several women also emphasised the importance of the class for themselves and other migrant and former refugee women, and felt strongly that the programme should continue.

Table 11: Hopes and goals

Hopes and goals	Number of responses
Improve English	11
Education/ jobs/ better life for family	9
Further study (including continuing in this class)	7
Get a better life (through the above)	7
Participate more in children's education e.g. talk with teachers	6
Get a job	5
Become more independent	5
Learn to drive/ get driver's licence	2
Give back to the host community, country, Government	2
Help family	1

*"Hopefully they [children] will be independent themselves and they can help me out with everything. **And the government that bring us out to the country, hopefully my kids will help them out too. ... Maybe one of them will be Prime Minister.** ... One of them learn teaching now. One of my kids is learning teaching."*

(emphasis added)

(This woman already has children going further with education, another doing accountancy).

4.7 HOPES AND GOALS

When the women were asked about their hopes and goals, most of them stressed the importance of education and qualifications in order to get good jobs and improve their lives. Their goals included hopes for themselves and for their families. Many wanted their children to go on to university. They also wanted to give back to their host community, country and government, be able to do things independently and to improve their family's life.

"... I know I won't reach to the level of going to university because it's too late for me. Yeah but what I want to learn from it is to help my kids that learning for their education, help them through everything. I can just help them out and I can learn better things. ... I know I'm a mother of lot of kids and a single mum, I know that, but hopefully, I know I won't be able to reach the university but hopefully I will learn to read so I can listen to them and help them out too." (emphasis added)

Hopes for themselves:

"I will hope to learn English very well, how to speak and how to read it. And how to talk to other people. ... I hope I'll reach the level of working, finding myself a job."

"Accounting and the computer, I want to do again [in] English because [it will be] easy for me, if I understand good English would be easy for me. ... people helping me, I have to help people and then I want to study the accounting and computer. That is dream. ... I'm not understand at the moment. I'm very low, when my future is going high I will [go to] Uni or Wintec you know, high class."

This student studied accounting and computer in her country so her dream is to do it here in English then she can help people in return for people helping her now.

"Well I learn very good English. I find any job. Yeah I find any job, I'm going anywhere by myself, yeah."

This student also thought the class could help her achieve that and that if she could get a good job she could help her family in Africa.

Many also said or implied that improving their own skills, gaining confidence and independence, and participation in their children's education was key to their children's success.

**Hopes for their families:**

"I just hope they [children] will be the same equal with the other people who learnt something and graduate something. ... Opportunity yeah, they can graduate from going university and all that."

"I would like my kids to learn good things. To get a good degree and everybody can work themselves and they can do their own jobs by themselves so I don't have to be there for them. They can just move on with their own life."

4.8 CONSTRAINTS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Several constraints or challenges were mentioned by the women.

Difficulty getting to class:

Women mentioned that transport (cost of petrol, getting buses) was difficult when the class is a distance from their home, and also that walking to class in cold wet weather was a constraint. I observed that with young children or poor health it can be difficult when the woman has no car or driver's licence.

Availability:

Sometimes there were not enough spaces for all those who enquired. Some of the women with a friend or relation in the class wanted to join, but there were already many women enrolled in that session.

I observed that most of the women with preschool children wanted the same session and the other session suits most of those not bringing children.

4.0: MIGRANT AND FORMER REFUGEE WOMEN'S VIEWS OF THE PROGRAMME [CONTD]

Noise:

Women reported that sometimes there were too many children and it was too noisy so that it was difficult to concentrate and to understand the teacher.

I also noted that at times it is difficult for the teacher or students to be heard. The noise is compounded during the school's play and lunch breaks as a main playing area is just outside the classroom.

Use of other languages in the classroom:

Because a lot of the women have the same first language or know it, they often use it in the classroom at times when they could be practising English.

"Only one thing wrong in class that too many of one ethnic group and they talk their language. Need more conversation in English in order to improve (my interpretation), more talking time in English for all."

While I have found it is extremely helpful for more competent students to interpret instructions or meanings in their own language for those less competent, it can dominate the class time and is not the most efficient use of the time for practising English. Other students who don't share this language also miss out.

Range of levels in the class:

Although none of the participants commented that this was a limitation, one former and one current student felt it would be good to have classes for different levels and particularly a class for women who are at a higher level. Because of preschool children or other family commitments, these women are often restricted from attending classes at their level, for example on campus at Wintec's Centre for Languages. These classes are usually full time and finding and paying for childcare can be a problem.

I have found teaching a multi-level class challenging and required more planning so an activity can be staged or have different versions or approaches for the two or more groups of students. While it would be preferable to have students of a similar level in each of the classes, for most one time of the day suits better than the other. However there are also benefits of having different levels together, a more experienced student can interpret for or support others.

Hours:

Most of the women felt the number of hours and sessions per week they attend class suits them well since their lives are busy with their families, work and other commitments

"It's perfect. Two hours is alright, three days is alright but we will hopefully get a little bit more times. Better times, make it a little bit longer other than two hours."

However two felt they would like a few more hours of class per week especially given the length of time it takes to learn English and written literacy, especially for those who never learnt to read or write in their own language.

Areas for further development:

Although the women spoke primarily about the benefits of the programme and their perceived gains, most implied that there were further skills, knowledge and areas of communication that would assist them with their everyday life and would help them to participate and contribute more fully in society.

I identified the following areas of communication and knowledge which could be further developed:

- Communication with Government departments, agencies and services about:
 - Housing,
 - Benefits,
 - Employment,
 - Education opportunities,
 - Health (making appointments and talking to medical staff),
- Talking with neighbours,
- Understand more about their children's education; what they are learning at school, how they are progressing and how as parents they can help and
- Home languages; how they can help their children value their mother tongue, encourage them to use it, including learn to read and write in it.





5.0: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS OF THE PROGRAMME

This section summarises the benefits of the programme for the women, their families and communities as perceived and observed by twelve stakeholders. The term “stakeholder” refers to ten people from the community, plus two family members (see 2.2 Participants). (See Appendix F for the stakeholders’ roles and their relationships with the students and the programme).

Some of the stakeholders had extensive knowledge about the backgrounds of one or more of the women and most understood the challenges and sometimes trauma experienced by migrant families:

“I’ve known these students who come in as new refugees from the Quota Refugee branch ... first time in New Zealand, know nobody, usually no English or have had very little English, traumatic backgrounds in terms of having to flee countries and often been in camps or illegal citizens in another country so come with all sorts of motivations to do well in a new country and to start a new life but also sometimes some hindrances to learning the new life.”

“...When they [the family] arrived in May 2008 she was so withdrawn and so overwhelmed she was in grief, she was in culture shock, she was overwhelmed, the whole works, absolutely.”

All of the stakeholders felt that the programme had helped the students, families and wider community as expressed by the two family members:

“100% yes ... We have to say thank you very much what you done for us”.

“Yes I completely agree that this class helped my mother because when she arrived she doesn’t know, she even can’t write letters.”

A family member described the impact of his wife learning English and coming to class on their relationship and future. Initially he had to do everything for his wife but as she learned more English she became more independent, with benefit for both of them.

“... I have to work for her. I have to do accommodation, everything. Whatever she need ... When she study good English she can work, she can help me so that’s what I believe, we can work together. We can help each other.

The Hamilton East School staff commended the ways in which participation in the school community and children’s education had increased for the women and/ or their children.

*“And also it’s good for their kids because the kids actually see them around. Everybody else’s parents come into the school for sports and coaching and all those kinds of things, and those children may have previously felt a little left out but now their own parents are here, they’re learning, they’re turning up to sports games, things that they possibly wouldn’t have, so I just think the course has actually increased their confidence in becoming part of the school community and integrating but at the same time having their cultural differences respected. **I think it’s really important personally.**”(emphasis added)*

5.0: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS OF THE PROGRAMME [CONTD]

5.1 LANGUAGE, LITERACY, NUMERACY AND LEARNING TO LEARN SKILLS

Most of the stakeholders (10) commented on the benefits and gains in English language, literacy, numeracy and learning to learn skills for the women. Where stakeholders gave examples of increasing competency of specific skills or activities, these are shown in table 12.

"I can see now she (has) no problem with the letters, numbers and also she tries sometimes to read, you know some words, sentences sometimes. She's even familiar with some English words like a car, sometimes stop signs, everything she doesn't know before."

"It's also helping a little bit I guess with recognising forms. They may not fully understand what is in the form but they're actually understanding that forms are important and when a notice or newsletter comes home, even if they don't quite have a comprehension or the interpretation there they do understand that they need to ask whereas quite often I think in the past they probably just threw them in the bin."



5.2 PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY INCLUDING ACCESSING FURTHER EDUCATION OR EMPLOYMENT

More emphasis was given to the increase in students' confidence which had developed from acquiring language, literacy and learning skills but also as a result of the support and networking that takes place in class. Stakeholders stressed how this confidence and these skills were helping these women with their settlement and participation in the community.

"It helps the women in the classes with essential English for living as normal functioning adults in an English-speaking community ..."

*"They **gain enough English and confidence** to enable them to be **more independent and to gain some form of control over their lives.**"(Emphasis added)*

"Very relevant [the programme] to settling into New Zealand and all the basic tasks that people have to do in New Zealand."

*"... the way you support them in their goals and your hospitality with the meal at the end of the term is really lovely, and inviting people into the class that you're associated with through the school or with the community **it all helps them to feel included and part of community.**" (emphasis added)*

The school office staff had noticed that the women were more confident now to approach them for their requests and were braver about communicating directly rather than through their children.

Table 12: Benefits to social and community participation skills

Observed benefits of programme	Number of responses
* English language, literacy, numeracy and learning to learn skills	10
Shopping, including banking, putting petrol in car	1
Using the phone	1
General confidence and skills for participating in society	11
Talking to neighbours, participating more in the host community	7

“... there was a turnaround and she’s happier, more confident... She was looking at me, and listening, and much more attentive than [before] ... she didn’t understand a thing. ... it’s been a delight to see her progress and actually initiate a little bit of the conversation as much as she can in her limited way ...”

5.3 PARTICIPATION IN CHILDREN’S EDUCATION

All the stakeholders, except the family member who doesn’t have children, talked about the women’s increased participation in their children’s education, how the programme has encouraged and enhanced intergenerational literacy and education and the positive effect this has for the women, their families and communities including the Hamilton East School community.

One of the stakeholders, who had been involved in the initial proposal for the programme, considered the programme’s intentions were fulfilled:

“... it would provide that inter-generational connection between a school, where most of the parents have their kids, and that they could then become more involved in the life of the community through the school. And I think that that has proven to be the case.”

Table 13 shows how stakeholders considered that participation in children’s education had increased.

Table 13: Stakeholder views of benefits to participation in children’s education

Observed benefits of programme	Number of responses
General participation in children’s education	10
Empowerment as mothers and learners	5
Can continue in role as mother	1
Children benefit when parents participate in their education	5
Understand more about children’s education	5
Help children with learning	4

“Some women have chosen now to bring their children to our school even though they may live further away, closer to another neighbourhood school. ... because they feel like they know us and we know their children already. The students at the school love having the women and the children there...”

So some of the women have grown so much in confidence so that they’re actually brave enough to ask things at the office, come and talk to the teacher by themselves, maybe come to a parent conference, and also some of them have gone from attending this class to thinking about further education. That’s a huge leap.”

5.0: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS OF THE PROGRAMME [CONTD]

Each theme is illustrated below.

General participation in children's education

A significant portion of the stakeholders considered that a key benefit of the programme was the increase in confidence and participation of the women in their children's education, intergenerational literacy and education.

"They become a little bit more involved, feel a connection here with what their children are doing, what the teachers are trying to do."

"They're asking a lot more questions, they're ... starting to understand the culture of schooling in New Zealand. There's been a big shift."

Empowerment as mothers and learners

Stakeholders commented that the women are empowered as mothers when they understand the school system, what is happening at their children's school and for their children, as well as understanding the language of their children. They are also empowered as mothers and learners as they gain the confidence and skills to talk to school staff and as a learner in their own right.

"Children need to know that their parents understand what is happening at school and in the society around them – it is difficult enough raising children when the parents have total command of the language – to have a mother who does not understand the language of the child's world is a risk not only for that child and that family but for wider society."

"...these classes empower them. So I think they see themselves as a learner as well as their children, ... their husband or spouse might be learning, or not learning, but they certainly I think feel that they're one of the learners in their families and that they're empowered to learn."

Can continue in role as mother

One stakeholder emphasised the importance of these classes being part-time and flexible, (so women can take time out if necessary). Being based at a school, means the women can continue in their roles as mothers. This is especially important for those who are single parents and without an extended family to help with the parenting role.

"Very relevant to settling into New Zealand and all the basic tasks that people have to do in New Zealand like talking to schools, so that's been really helpful. And obviously this does impact on the families. Mothers are able to continue to still be with their families, with their children, which means the children get a parent caring for them."

Children benefit when parents participate in their education

Another stakeholder highlighted how the programme helped a woman's relationship with her children helped her adapt to the new culture including that of the school community.

"I think that her involvement in your class has given her an ability to connect a little bit more with her children as far as their learning is concerned and the way she's been able to do that is to talk to them. What she's going through in your group is similar to what they have been going through at school with their culture adaptation and English language and support systems, and making friends ..."

Staff at Hamilton East School staff also emphasised the benefits for the children of the women attending the class as well as other children in the school and the school community in general.

Understand more about children’s education and help children with learning

The following comments illustrate how the programme helps the women gain more understanding of their children’s education and the part that they can play in it. This encourages them to have a more active role and help their children with their learning.

“And I think particularly with women and the education of their kids that there’s often a bit of ... a misunderstanding, between what they think education is and what their children are going to perceive education as. And with their kids growing up as Kiwi kids, how do they get involved in that, particularly if they’re not very literate themselves? And so you’re giving them all of those tools and all of that confidence to be able to not just bring their kids along but to find appropriate ways of interacting with their kids, involving their kids.”

“They are also then able to gain information about the progress, or lack of progress, of their children at school. They can ask questions, [they’ve] been shown how to interpret school reports and notices, and play a more active role in the education of their children.”

5.4 OTHER BENEFITS TO MIGRANT/REFUGEE WOMEN, THEIR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Stakeholders identified other benefits of attending the classes, as did the women themselves. While the women talked primarily in terms of benefits or gains for themselves, the stakeholders also commented on the flow-on benefits or gains for family and community, as shown in Table 14.

Most of the stakeholders observed that as a result of attending classes the women were less isolated and made connections with other women and members of the community and this helped them participate more fully in the host society. They also developed friendships so that the classes have become a community themselves.

Other benefits mentioned were increased happiness, gaining information about services and culture, a step on the pathway to other goals such as education or work, and becoming a lifelong learner. Even if a mother took a break, for example stayed at home with a new baby, she could pick up her learning again at a later date.

“I think it’s good for them just generally to interact with different cultures themselves otherwise they’re isolated within their own family groups and cultural group because a lot of the women are unable to work, they don’t have that option of mixing in that way.”

Table 14: Stakeholder views of other benefits to migrant women, their families and communities

Other Benefits	Number of responses
Benefits for family and community	10
Reduced isolation, made connections, developed friendships	9
Pathways to other education, work, etc.	4
Increased happiness	3
Encouraging lifelong learning	3
Gained information about services and culture	3

5.0: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS OF THE PROGRAMME [CONTD]

(emphasis added)

*“... and **what I’ve observed is the mums and feeling that they are lifelong learners.***

...so it’s quite exciting to observe that they feel even though they might have a couple of pre-schoolers that they are definitely learners.

... They really understand the idea that they are learning and there’ll be times when they can learn and other times when they might be home with the children or something but then they’ll be able to pick up the learning again. It’s quite fantastic to see that idea.”

Benefits for family and community

Hamilton East School staff in particular commented on the benefits of having women and children together in a programme held at the school. They felt that the women were starting to have a sense of belonging to the school community which benefits the school; mothers choosing to bring their children to that school, participating and supporting their children in school activities, children seeing adults as students and adults from different cultures mixing, supporting each other and becoming friends.

“Many of the women after coming to class for a little while feel like they belong to the Hamilton East School community... and I hope that the teachers and staff are really friendly towards them so they feel like they’ve got another place that they’re a part of.”

*“I’ve noticed that having ...the whole lot of **women together with their children it just unites them really**, and these women instead of feeling perhaps alone, even amongst their community, get their support from each other.”*

(emphasis added)

Likewise, the wider community was considered to benefit through increased participation in activities such as sporting or cultural events, and from working alongside a mixture of cultures and religions.

“The wider community also benefits as they can become more involved in activities such as school activities, sporting activities, cultural activities.

... There is no doubt at all that they are benefiting personally through the programme and that their families are benefiting and this has a flow-on effect out into the wider community.”

*“And probably it’s good for the community too, to see adults learning in that environment. It enhances the idea that adults are students as well, **there’s lots of empowering going on in your classroom. It’s just fantastic.**”*

(emphasis added)

“...the benefits to the wider community, as you know you support families that come in, you support the mothers, in caring for the children then you’re sort of raising healthy children, you’re supporting their integration into New Zealand society with the language. Eventually that does impact on the wider community in terms of less difficulties later on because they can learn the language.”



5.5 PROGRAMME FEATURES OF VALUE TO MIGRANT AND FORMER REFUGEE WOMEN

Stakeholder comments on the special nature of this programme and how it caters for these particular women are shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Stakeholder views of programme features of value to migrant/ refugee women

Valued programme features	Number of Responses
Good programme/ class, supportive learning environment, including experienced/ good teacher	9
Part time & hours suit	2
Can bring pre-school children	5
Proximity/ accessibility	1
Flexibility – (e.g. women can have a break from the class)	3
Have children attending Hamilton East School	1
Free	1
Mix of cultures/ learn about other cultures	4

“I think the programme is really user friendly for people because ... it takes children, because it’s part time, because it’s in the community. It’s very supportive of people ... people who have got family life or circumstances that are sort of up and down, or they just can’t sort of commit to something full time and on-going, where they have to be there, this is the ideal programme really for that because it has the flexibility. It has the supportive environment and it’s focused.”

“...other cultures get to mix with one another so you’re breaking down barriers of misunderstanding all over the board in terms of understanding different cultures.”

“And, particularly in the case of the Somali women, I think it is highly beneficial that they are working alongside a mixture of cultures and religions and getting to see just how multi-cultural NZ is becoming and how we all need to accept each other.”

Most stakeholders mentioned the quality of the programme and the supportive learning environment appropriate to the levels and needs of these students.

“... they can learn at their own pace, they can be supported in their learning with their classmates. I’m sure there’s a lot of sort of scaffolding and support goes on within their own little groups in the class so learning together rather than learning on their own, there’s lots and lots of evidence that learning is happening.”

Many also commented on one or more of the physical aspects as being important in providing a programme that caters for these students.

“... the idea of having the women and the children together in the classroom is so culturally appropriate for many of these people and ... emotionally appropriate for people from refugee backgrounds who don’t want to leave their kids – and you can understand why they don’t want to leave their kids.”

5.0: STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS OF THE PROGRAMME [CONTD]

5.6 HOPES AND GOALS

The family members shared their hopes and goals and the importance of education in achieving those goals. One explained how his wife is gradually becoming more independent as her English language skills improve and hoped she will get to a sufficient level to be able to find work. For now he must work for them both but in the future if they are both earning they may be able to buy a house, start a business and help other family members financially.

The other family member commented that his mother is becoming more independent and how important this is for her as the head of a household with many children. He hoped that sometime she will be able to get her driver's licence so her independence can increase further. He also acknowledged that everything takes time:

*"I believe this class helps my mum and if she continuously goes it will improve, even if every day she gets one word, one word plus one word, then we will find that [in the] next two years this big [lot of] of words, you know? **Little steps, a long time, she will have a lot of words...** And they will create sentences then it will go smoothly and further. And I have kind of said enough feeling that [a] thousand steps starts [with] one step." (emphasis added)*

He also stressed the importance of education for his siblings as the key to a better future for them all. He wanted to give back to the community and country that has given so much to them:

"... I hope they will all ... get in a sense that education is very important and do their study and become educated and help their community and also the country that they chose as their new country. We have to appreciate and give them back any sort of help because the only way we can benefit this country is by educating our kids. When we get educated we can help ...

And also I'm hoping all my family to be independent. Reach a certain level that they only help people, they don't receive help."

Although the other stakeholders weren't asked specifically about the migrant mothers' hopes and goals, many commented that this class was often the first step to take them to their goals. Also for many of the women, coming to the class has been the first realisation of the possibilities and that their hopes and goals are attainable. As one stakeholder commented:

"... and they've got hopes and dreams that they can take that learning and perhaps go on and do further courses, and realise their sort of career goals. So in terms of the place of the class, ... I think it's very much part of the pathway for these learners to take them on to other goals that they might have. Or it can be just a goal in itself."

5.7 CONSTRAINTS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Stakeholders also mentioned some challenges, especially in regards to the length of time it takes for even the smallest steps in developing English language and written literacy skills. This was particularly a challenge for those who have had little or no formal education and have not learned to read or write in their first or another language.

“It does take a while for these to happen as you know C, you know you’re talking months and years rather than weeks to see these improvements.”

Most of the stakeholders highlighted the benefits of holding the programme at a primary school for increasing the migrant mothers’ participation in their children’s education. However one stakeholder felt that most of the women and therefore their children could benefit from further support, for example providing a place to do homework and resources for their children to use.

“From talking to them, I think the whole school/ homework/report issue is a huge one for the Somali women. They have never gone through our education system so don’t understand how much emphasis we place on the written word and why we offer so many activities such as music and sport. They don’t seem to place the same value on items that we see as essential, e.g. always making sure the kids have pens and pencils and paper and books to read.”

I have discussed this issue with other colleagues, and noted it as an area for further development in the programme.





6.0: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this concluding section, a summary of gains reported by the migrant and refugee women and stakeholders in education, participation, inclusion and wellbeing is discussed, followed by Recommendations.

6.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to discover and report the perceived and observed benefits of a community-based ESOL literacy programme based at a primary school for migrant and former refugee women, their families and community.

Many of the women enrolled in the ESOL literacy programme at Hamilton East Primary School since 2006 had little or no previous formal education and many have not learned to read and write in their first or another language. They are not only faced with the task of learning these skills and operating in a new culture but are also expected to understand and participate in their children's education and maintain their role as a parent. They are raising their children often without the support of the extended family which was available in their home country. Some are sole parents of a large family. If they don't understand the language or culture of their new community or systems such as education and health, they and their families are severely disadvantaged. They may not know how to access some of the services that are available to them. For many, the trauma they have suffered and health issues also contribute to the challenges they have in settling in their new country. They are often reliant on their children to interpret for them in situations where it is inappropriate for children to take this role.

Along with those challenges, many of the women are unable to access English language classes or gain other education or employment, because of family commitments, level of English language and literacy, confidence and transport.

In this context, the benefits of the community-based ESOL literacy programme based at Hamilton East Primary School were found to be significant.

The questionnaire, interviews and teacher/researcher observations provided a wealth of data highlighting the importance of the community-based ESOL programme for the migrant and former refugee women who attend or have attended, their families and community.

All of the participants in the study felt that the community-based ESOL programme had helped the students in overcoming many of the challenges with which they are faced and therefore significantly supported their settlement in Aotearoa/New Zealand. They gave examples of benefits for the women as well as subsequent benefits for their families and communities. All of the benefits identified by the women students were confirmed by the stakeholders.

The students identified benefits for themselves and other women. They felt that the programme had helped them with their language, literacy and learning to learn skills and that these skills also helped them with their independence to participate more fully in the community and with their children's education. They also identified that the knowledge, practice and support they gained from attending classes contributed to this and gave specific examples of tasks they felt they could now accomplish, such as visiting the doctor, WINZ or Housing New Zealand, speaking to their children's teacher, and communicating with neighbours or people in a work place. The knowledge they had gained also included a greater understanding and participation in their children's education, such as speaking to their children's teacher and attending parent-teacher meetings. Given the benefits they had gained, they would also recommend the programme to other women in their community.

6.0: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS [CONTD]

The stakeholders commented similarly on the benefits of the programme for the women and emphasised the women's increased confidence, skills and participation in the host community and how these contributed to wellbeing. Also mentioned were gains in independence, empowerment, life-long learning, increased happiness, making connections and reducing isolation; again contributing to the wellbeing for the student, family and community.

The stakeholders also stressed that the programme and attending class had contributed to the women's participation in their children's education and how this participation had a positive effect for them, their families, the school and the community.

Thus, the data gathered in the study highlighted the importance of the programme and confirmed that it is helping with settlement and life in New Zealand in terms of:

- 1) Education gains,
- 2) Participation and inclusion gains and
- 3) Emotional and wellbeing gains.

These gains are discussed below as well as the challenges, leading to a set of recommendations.

6.2 EDUCATION GAINS

Of the perceived and observed benefits of the programme, most visible were the gains in English language, literacy, numeracy and learning to learn skills. While these skills can also be measured to some extent using tools such as assessment tasks based on the Starting Points Assessment Guide (2010), Benseman (2012), and Field & Sellars (2009) concur that for many students, with little or no previous formal education or experiencing interruptions in their education, progress in terms of these assessment tasks can be slow. As Benseman (2012, p. 29) stressed "in excess of 500 hours of tuition" is required in order to make any significant progress.

The women's own perception that their English language and literacy had improved enhanced their confidence. Confidence and independence were also enhanced by the supportive environment of the community-based class and the similar experiences of the other women attending. While increased confidence and independence are difficult to measure, they are significant in helping "to develop the motivation to further extend language and literacy skills" (Benseman, 2012, p. 26). This "interconnectedness" is illustrated by Benseman's (2012, p. 27) "wheel of progress". Furness (2011a, p. 253) also confirmed that such categories of "affirmation and learning" were outcomes of four family-focused literacy programmes in her in-depth New Zealand study.

Providing an accessible, supportive and nurturing learning environment which is flexible and responsive to the needs of the women was integral to the development of the women's skills, confidence and knowledge in building a new life in Aotearoa/ New Zealand.

The skills and knowledge gained, along with increased confidence also had positive effects on communication, meaning the women are more able to carry out everyday tasks independently especially those involving communication with agencies or service providers.

6.3 PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION GAINS

As the women access services more independently and improve outcomes for themselves and their families in the community, there are subsequent benefits for society, for example by easing demand on health services, and children succeeding in education. Also, as the women become empowered and less dependent on their children, spouses or others, they are more able to participate and contribute to society.

For most of the women attending this class it has been the first step on their pathway to other opportunities, particularly further education and the realisation that their learning is beneficial not only for themselves but their families and communities. At Hamilton East School it helps those children at the school whose mothers attend the class, as well as the other children who benefit from the women's participation and seeing that learning is a life-long process. Some of the women have now chosen Hamilton East School for their children as they feel comfortable and more confident in this setting. Several have also moved on to study full or part time in the Wintec Centre for Languages programmes or encouraged other family members to do so.

6.4 EMOTIONAL AND WELLBEING GAINS

Again, as demonstrated by Furness (2012), gains in education, participation and inclusion have subsequent benefits for individual, family and community wellbeing.

Individual wellbeing is enhanced by the connections established between the women in the class. Having children and the migrant and refugee experience in common brings these women together especially for the many who may otherwise feel quite isolated. The friendships and support for each other that develop, along with sharing knowledge and appreciation of

each other's cultures, helps to create a community within the class to which they now belong. This sense of belonging can then extend beyond the class to the school and Wintec. For at least one woman this has also been a stepping stone to belonging in her own ethnic community here in Hamilton instead of the isolation she experienced prior to coming to the class.

As already discussed, for many women this programme has often been the first step of a pathway to take them to their goals; the first realisation of the possibilities and that their hopes and goals are attainable. By improving their language and literacy skills they are able to do things more independently, get jobs or go on to further education. This puts them in a better position to help their families, including those still in their home countries, and give back to their host community, country and the government. They also have hopes for their children, to get a good education and jobs, so they too can be more independent and have a better life.

Providing an accessible, supportive and nurturing learning environment which is flexible and responsive to the needs of the women has been integral to the success of the programme. Hamilton East School provides a venue that supports this concept while Wintec Centre for Languages provides professional support for the teacher and the opportunity for the students to feel a part of the tertiary and continuing education environment. Although aligned to a tertiary institutional programme, being based in the community allows this flexibility and responsiveness and means the programme is not tied into a curriculum or outcomes that are inappropriate for these particular students.

These classes also provide an opportunity for women to continue or to pick up their language and literacy learning if they have to take a break, for example for childrearing, health issues or work. Their vital role as a parent is recognised whereas in other programmes

6.0: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS [CONTD]

it may be secondary to their role as a student. Some have been in or are ready to move on to classes at a higher level but because of their parenting role they are not able to enrol in those classes for the time being. As a teacher I provide activities to extend those at a higher level as much as possible.

6.5 CHALLENGES

While the perceived and observed benefits of the programme far outweighed the limitations, there were some challenges.

These challenges are mostly environmental and logistical and fortunately the flexibility of the programme allowed me, as teacher, to adapt content or my approach to create a learning opportunity or reduce the disruptive impact it may have.

The environmental and logistical challenges identified include:

- accommodating all the women (and children) who want to attend,
- the disruptions caused as a result of sharing the classroom with young children,
- limitations in activities that can be offered for the children,
- consistency of attendance,
- multi-level classes and
- choice of language in the classroom, when a group sharing a mother tongue are present.

To some these challenges may be insurmountable but for all those involved in the programme (students, me as teacher, the teacher aide and volunteers), acceptance and support for each other developed knowing that the advantages outweighed the disruptions.

For instance, the ability to bring preschool children to class makes it possible for many of these migrant mothers to attend an English Language class when they would not otherwise, as either their children or babies are too young to attend an Early Childhood

Education Centre, or they are unable to access one for reasons such as transport, availability or cost. However once the children are old enough to attend a kindergarten they usually do. When the children are young and especially if they are being breast fed, it is comforting for the women to have them close and at the same time feel confident that their children are being looked after so they can get on with their study.

However, sharing the classroom with the children means there are disruptions such as noise or children requiring their mother's attention for food, toilet or upset. There are also opportunities for conversations and discussion about their children, their learning and needs and for problem solving.

It also means limitations on some of the activities that are offered for the children, for example music or hammering, and the number of children that can attend at any one time due to the amount of space and the disruptions described above. However, the learning and socialising opportunities for the children attending are numerous.

As described in the findings (4.8) because of other commitments or constraints for the women, the classes are multi levelled posing another challenge. This requires extra planning and preparing lessons to facilitate learning for all the students. However, there are still times when not all students are fully engaged or extended as unfortunately basic skills such as handwriting and letter-sound recognition require individual attention, a lot of repetition and follow up which is not always possible. Nevertheless in this learning environment the women are able to support each other in a variety of ways and therefore, even if progress with literacy skills is less than it might be in a class for similar levels, there are still many gains and benefits attained.

A further challenge is measuring and showing the progress in English language, literacy and numeracy that the students are achieving, and aligning this to the Starting Points (Tertiary Education Commission, 2008b), or Learning Progressions for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (Tertiary Education Commission, 2008a). Because of the level of most of the students and the range of levels in the class, the type of assessment tasks that require the teacher to work with one student at a time are not feasible given the number of students and the time it would require. These assessment tasks, particularly those from the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool (Tertiary Education Commission, 2010a) are also not necessarily appropriate for these students given the tasks are often not within their experiences, cultural knowledge or necessarily useful to them.

It may take a long time for some students to show progress (Benseman, 2012). Even following the Starting Points Assessment Guide (Tertiary Education Commission, 2010b) and a 1-3 scale can show very little or no evidence of progress in the time between one assessment and another. Although it is possible to set some assessment tasks for all the students to do at the same time, observations and acknowledgement of other areas of progress are more practical and relevant. As this study and that of Benseman (2012) and Furness (2011a, 2011b) have highlighted, there are significant and numerous other gains for the students, their families and communities from a programme such as this.

6.6 CONCLUSION

This study provides valuable insight into the essential role that the Wintec Community- Based ESOL Literacy Programme for migrant and former refugee women at Hamilton East School provided for the women who attended it, their families, schools and communities. The programme caters specifically for those migrant or former refugee women with little or no previous education and those with pre-school children and other family commitments.

Although the benefits of such community-based literacy programmes are difficult to measure in terms of English language, literacy and numeracy gains, the current study confirms that the benefits of this programme extended beyond the classroom. The community-based programme assisted migrant mothers and their families to become more confident and independent and therefore helped them participate and contribute more fully in their communities, school and society as a whole. Furthermore, by including the observations of a significant group of community stakeholders, the study highlighted that these benefits have a flow-on effect to the wider community. The programme benefits were seen to enhance the wellbeing of the women, their families, the school and the communities in which they are involved.

All the participants affirmed that the programme should continue in its current setting of a primary school. They pointed out that there should be no limitation on the length of time the women might attend. Those who are ready to move on to other classes or employment generally do, either because their children are old enough so they can take more time away from childrearing, or their level of English language and written literacy is sufficient, or both. Stakeholder recommendations included that there should be more classes like this in other settings.

6.0: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS [CONTD]

6.7 Further development and recommendations

As a result of the study, the following development and recommendations are as follows:

- 1) That community-based literacy programmes, including those hosted in schools and/or linked to tertiary education providers, continue to be funded and that the funding of hours per student reflect their needs.
- 2) That the assessment of progress of students and evaluation of such community-based literacy programmes include more than literacy and numeracy gains such as other gains in education, participation and inclusion, and emotional gains and wellbeing.
- 3) That a more appropriate method of assessment of language, literacy, numeracy and learning gains is developed for such community-based literacy programmes, such as one based on Starting Points.
- 4) That community-based literacy programmes continue to develop opportunities to help students with their understanding of life in Aotearoa/New Zealand and how to access and communicate with Government departments, health and other service providers, schools, neighbours and other people in the community.
- 5) That community-based literacy programmes continue to develop opportunities to help students with their understanding and engagement in their children's education, including development of homework support programmes for refugee children.
- 6) That parents in community-based literacy programmes continue to be encouraged in their use of home languages with their children, in line with emerging language policy in Aotearoa/New Zealand around the value of bi- and multilingualism (Royal Society of New Zealand, 2013).
- 7) That relevant government agencies investigate options for increasing access to community-based literacy classes for women with pre-school children.



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APPENDIX A.1

Background Information Questionnaire – Former Students ESOL Literacy for Migrant Women, Centre for Languages, Wintec

The following questions are to gather background information for the study.

1. Where do you come from? _____

2. When did you come to New Zealand? _____

3. For how long did you attend the “ESOL Literacy for Migrant Women” class? _____

4. Have you been to any other English language classes in New Zealand? _____

5. What languages do you speak? _____

6. Did you go to school in your country, or in another country? _____

If yes, for how long? _____

7. Did you learn to read and write in your first language? _____

8. Do you have any children? _____

If so:

how many go to a preschool? _____

how many go to primary or middle/ intermediate school? _____

how many go to high school? _____

how many are in tertiary education, training or work? _____

APPENDIX A.2

Background Information: Questionnaire for Current Students ESOL Literacy for Migrant Women, Centre for Languages, Wintec

The following questions are to gather background information for the study.

1. Where do you come from? _____

2. When did you come to New Zealand? _____

3. How long have you been coming to the "ESOL Literacy for Migrant Women" class? _____

4. Have you been to any other English language classes in New Zealand? _____

5. What languages do you speak? _____

6. Did you go to school in your country, or in another country? _____

If yes, for how long? _____

7. Did you learn to read and write in your first language? _____

8. Do you have any children? _____

If so:

how many go to a preschool? _____

how many go to primary or middle/ intermediate school? _____

how many go to high school? _____

how many are in tertiary education, training or work? _____

APPENDIX B.1

Interview questions for former students:

These questions will be used as a guide; they may not necessarily all be asked or asked in this particular order. The text in blue is notes for the interviewer and extra questions or prompts if required.

1. Did this class help you with your settlement and life in New Zealand?

If so, how?

2. Do you think this class has helped you do any of the following? (tick examples:)

read and write shopping talk to the doctor
answer/ talk on the phone, leave/ take messages
know more about your child's/ children's education
help your child with learning
communicate with government departments, e.g: WINZ, Housing New Zealand
participate in the community, talking to neighbours
get a job or go on to other study
other

3. What did this class help you to do that you could not do before you came to the class?

How did it help your family, your children?
(e.g. helping children, parent interviews)

4. What are your hopes for yourself?

What are your hopes for your family?

What are your expectations and goals for yourself and your family?

Do you think the class helped you achieve these?

If so, how?

5. How has this class affected your hopes and plans?

6. What more did you want to get out of this class?

What else did you want to learn or know about?

Do you see anything we could do differently or better in class?

7. There are other English language classes you could have gone to in Hamilton.
Did you look at any others?

If so, what stopped you from going to them? (e.g. transport, time, childcare, level of language)

Why did you choose this one?

Why did you come back or continue?

8. Would you recommend this class to other women in your community? Why?

9. How did you find out about this class?

(This question may be asked at the beginning as part of the introduction to the interview.)

10. Once I have reviewed the information I have gathered I may want to clarify or know more about something you have told me. Is it OK if we meet again to do this?

7. There are other English language classes you could go to in Hamilton.
Did you look at any others?

If so, what stops you from going to them? (e.g. transport, time, childcare, level of language)

Why did you choose this one?

Why did you come back or continue?

8. Would you recommend this class to other women in your community? Why?

9. How did you find out about this class?

(This question may be asked at the beginning as part of the introduction to the interview.)

10. Once I have reviewed the information I have gathered I may want to clarify or know more about something you have told me. Is it OK if we meet again to do this?

APPENDIX B.3

Survey/ interview with family members:

A family member of the student participant will be invited to complete a written questionnaire. This will be sent home with the student and may also be translated into the home language. The family member can also indicate if they are willing to be interviewed at a time and place to suit them. In the interview the questions will be explored further as with those for the student participants.

1. How are you related to (*name of student*) who attends the ESOL Literacy for Migrant Women at Hamilton East School?
2. Do you think this class has helped or helps (*name of student*) with her settlement and life in New Zealand? If so, what has this class helped her to do that she could not do before she came to the class? For example:
reading and writing shopping talking to the doctor
answering/ talking on the phone, leaving/ taking messages
knowing more about her child's/ children's education
helping her child with learning
communicating with government departments, e.g: WINZ, Housing New Zealand
participating in the community, talking to neighbours
3. Do you think this class has helped or helps your family? If so, how do you think it has helped?
4. What are your hopes for your family?
What are your expectations and goals for yourself and your family?
Do you think the class can help you achieve these?
If so, how?
Has this class helped you achieve these?

APPENDIX B.4

Interview with stakeholders in the community:

The following questions will be used in an interview with people who have knowledge of the students and/or programme for example; staff from Hamilton East School, Wintec Centre for Languages, Refugee Services, English Language Partners.

- In what capacity do you, or have you known these, or some of these students, and/ or their programme?
- How do you think this programme has helped/ helps the student/s, families and wider community?
Please give specific examples or evidence of this.

Participant Information Sheet

A study of the perceived and observed benefits of the Wintec Centre for Languages programme "ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) Literacy for Migrant Women."

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

What is this study about?

This study is to find out what the benefits of the Wintec Centre for Languages "ESOL Literacy for Migrant Women" programme are for the students, their families and communities. It is also to find out what can be done better.

Who is doing the study?

Celia Hope, the teacher for the "ESOL Literacy for Migrant Women" programme, will be doing this study. She will also have some help from other staff at Wintec. Professional interpreters may help with the interviews.

What will you need to do?

Students: With your permission, she will ask you to write some answers to some background questions about your education, the languages you know and about your time in New Zealand. She can help you to write these.

She will also interview you about your class and how you think it helps you. A professional interpreter can also be at the interview so that you can use your strongest language. The interviews will be held at Hamilton East School.

Other participants: With your permission, Celia will interview you to find out what you think the benefits of this class are. She will organise with you a time and a place that is convenient for you.

How long will it take?

The questionnaire will probably take about 20 minutes. You can do this in class as part of the lesson. The interviews will probably also take about 20 minutes, although this may vary a bit.

What happens to the information?

Celia will collect your written answers and record the interviews and she may take notes as you talk. This information and your details will be totally confidential and she won't write anything that identifies you.

Once the study is finished, the information and data will be kept in a secure place and only the researcher will be able to look at it.

Celia will use the information to write a report and to make a presentation at a conference. Before she writes the report she will check with you that the information she has collected is correct. The report will go to the Wintec Research Office and may be published in a journal. Celia will also tell the student participants about the findings in the report.

Important information

- You don't have to participate in this study.
- If you do, you can withdraw from it at any time. You don't have to give a reason.
- You do not have to answer any questions that you don't want to answer.
- Your identity remains confidential – the researcher will not use your name or anything that identifies you in the reports.
- Only the researcher, Celia Hope, will have access to the information you provide. All information will be confidential to her.

If you have any questions about this study, you can contact:

Celia Hope (teacher and researcher)

Phone: (07) 856 3686

e-mail: celia.hope@wintec.ac.nz

APPENDIX D

Information and Interview questions for Students in the Wintec “ESOL Literacy for Migrant Women” class

Please share and talk about this with someone in your family or a friend.

I am doing a study about the “Perceived and observed benefits of a community based ESOL literacy programme for migrant and former refugee women” (our class). I hope you will help me by answering some questions in an interview.

Here are some questions I might ask you when we have our interview. I will ask them in English and an interpreter will ask them in your first language. You can answer them in your language too.

I might not ask all the questions and I might not ask them in this order. The words in italics are extra questions to help us if we need them.

1. Has this class helped you with your settlement and life in New Zealand?
If so, how?

For example do you think this class has helped you do any of the following?

read and write

do your shopping

talk to the doctor

answer and talk on the phone

know more about your children’s education

help your child with learning

communicate with government departments, e.g: WINZ, Housing New Zealand

participate in the community, talk to neighbours

2. What are your hopes for yourself?
What are your hopes for your family?
3. How has this class affected your hopes and plans?
4. What more do you want to get out of this class?
What else do you want to learn or know about?
Do you see anything we could do differently or better in class?
5. There are other English language classes you could go to in Hamilton. Did you look at any others?
If so, what stops you from going to them?
Why did you choose this one?
Why do you continue to come to this one?
6. Would you recommend this class to other women in your community? Why?
7. How did you find out about this class?

APPENDIX E: RECRUITMENT

Table 14: Stakeholder views of other benefits to migrant women, their families and communities

	Number of Women
Friend or relation (usually another student)	6
Hamilton East School	3
English Language Partners	3
Refugee Services	2
Teacher	2
ESOL Advisor	1
Newspaper advertisement	1

APPENDIX F: STAKEHOLDERS' POSITIONS OR ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENT/S AND THE PROGRAMME

Table 17: Stakeholder's position or role and relationship with student/s and the programme

Position or role of interviewee	Knowledge of student/s and/or programme	Relevant knowledge or relationship to student/s and/or programme
Director, Centre for Languages, Wintec	Programme	Knows its purpose, what it aims to achieve for women from migrant community
Volunteer in class & Home tutor for a student	1 student previously + others now & programme	Has been volunteering in one of classes once a week
Social worker, Refugee Services	some students	Knows students who come as new refugees from the Quota Refugee branch ... * Knows about the programme through ESOL Advisor who assesses and recommends an English language classes
Office Administrator, Hamilton East School	students, families and programme a little	<i>"Working in the school office I've met some of the ladies who have come to see you, I've brought them over to you. Some of them have been parents of our students so that's quite nice, you get that other side of it as well."</i>
Office Administrator, Hamilton East School	students, families and programme a little	<i>"I've worked as the office administrator at Hamilton East School for quite a few years and so we've known about it since the programme was first introduced and used at Hamilton East School and also through some of our parents at the school and their children who go to the school. We've known it through them as well so we've seen it work, we've seen it in action and we quite often are on first name basis with some of your students."</i>
Principal, Hamilton East School	students, families and quite a bit about the programme	<i>"Since 2006 this programme has been operating at Hamilton East School so I have known C the teacher as a liaison person and I have got to know the students through seeing them on a daily basis and talking with them on their way in and out of class, and at the gate, and also sometimes visiting the class to inform them of things and also of course to their beautiful shared lunches."</i>

Reliever	students & programme	<i>"I have known the women on the programme for a couple of years now, having worked with them and/or their children as a reliever. I have also tutored the teacher aide's children and touched base with some of the students in activities outside the programme... I have enjoyed spending time each term with them at a shared lunch."</i>
ESOL teacher, Silverdale Normal School	a student	Has known this student since May 2008 when she came to NZ as refugee and 6 of her children were enrolled at school. The teacher was responsible for their education and pastoral care. <i>"So as part of my pastoral care programme of this particular family I made weekly home visits to the house to speak with your student as the mother of these children in relation to her children's settlement into our school."</i>
ESOL Advisor, English Link	programme mostly, some students	Programme: First thought about concept with previous Head of School when working at Wintec. Students: Some when they have been looking for a class and this seemed the best place for them, some as are former refugees or through their connection with ELP**, Shared Lunches and pathwaying (helps some find a class to move on to after this.)
Team Manager, English Language Partners, and previously Literacy Programme coordinator	programme & some students	Programme: Through discussions with the teacher especially when the programme first started. Students: Some may have gone to ESOL literacy classes but when they had children they came to "Migrant Mothers". Also referring students to each other's classes. Colleague of teacher: <i>"... really, as a peer colleague ... and certainly as an interested person seeing the students move on in their learning"</i>
Husband	Student	Knew the student before she started the class so is aware of progress since attending it.
Son of a student	Student	Knew the student before she started the class so is aware of progress since attending it.

** ELP = English Language Partners

