



Talk English

Issue 3
May 2009

Xenophobia

Nicole Rimensburger

Incidents of xenophobia both last year and this year, brought to light the further injustice, abuse and inhumanity suffered by refugees. Despite the attacks and spread of violence across the country, Talk English continued teaching, providing some continuity to disrupted lives and a place to express fear and anger.

Publication of
Talk English

059-714-NPO

*Designed and compiled by
Megan Reuvers*

Newsletter

The Year for 2009!

Julie Douglas

2008 came and disappeared in a trail of vapour and still Talk English survives and even thrives. Our teachers are committed, dedicated and learning a great deal about how to cope with the challenges presented by our unique groups of students.

I sometimes ask myself how this project began and survived - especially as it is run completely by professional, volunteer teachers. I think the answer is our wonderful students, who give us so much back, and the amazing group of relentless, proactive and resourceful teachers. From the original group of July 2005 CELTA-trained teachers, Waheeda and I remain. Nicole and Megan joined soon after and are both very active. Sarah, the co-founder, is in England, but promises to be back soon. Other long termers include Pam, Janet and Jenni. Our core was strengthened by Sue, Lindo, Lindi, Promise, Trui and Ummi. Other wonderful teachers taught with us for a short while before leaving Durban or South Africa. We specially wish Lisa good luck with her Masters study in Bristol and send Rosemary our best wishes as she tries to find her niche in England.

2009 will be our breakthrough year. We are offering a 20 hour training course for those who want to teach with us but have no TEFL training. Waheeda, ex-Director of Studies at International House, Durban, has designed a focused crash course that gives basic TEFL and classroom management skills -



free for current teachers, and R1250 for potential teachers and members of the public. We invited two Addington teachers to join the course. Mrs Theunissen, the principal, has asked us to develop a course for all her teachers, who daily teach children from many countries.

Our Saturday morning lessons are quite slick and organized compared to the old days. New students go straight into a reception group to be assessed before joining a suitable class. Our timing – never a strong point with students arriving at various times – has become much tighter. We open with a warmer at 9.15, phonemics at 9.30 and students go to their individual groups at 10.00.

Our lessons are more professional and our teachers are making a name for the organisation and themselves. 2009 has already shown that it is going to be a very active year! Take a look at our Student Stats to see our growth.



Talk English Christmas Party

Christmas Party

Nicole Rimensberger

Our 2008 teaching year was wrapped up with a fabulous and fun-filled Christmas party that was well attended by both students and past and current teachers.

The talent show took the form of "60 Seconds of Fame" and showcased a range of skills from telling a joke, a card trick and singing, to a skit on crime and life in South Africa.

Also part of the programme, were the prize giving, the lucky draw for the Christmas hampers and a present for each student thanks to Nivea/Beiersdorf. A light lunch followed the morning's activities and gave teachers and students the opportunity to relax, socialise and talk English!

Student Stats!

Megan Reuvers

2008 saw a record number of students pass through our open Saturday classes, over 150 students from the DRC, Burundi, Mozambique, Somalia and South Africa, attended throughout the year.

Usually the new year picks up really slowly, however, 2009 has seen no less than 40 students attending class every single Saturday! Our nationalities are growing even more diverse. We now teach Students from the Comores, Uganda and even the Ukraine!

Student Profile

Sandra Smith

Anastasio (Yuma Bahande) is from Kalemie a town in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Her journey to South Africa began when she and her husband fled their home because his job as an assistant logistics officer brought him into danger. The army wanted the keys to the trucks and offices of his employer, Care Internationale. They fled with their two children, a boy of three and a daughter only one and a half months old. Anastasio describes how they traveled in whatever way they could – by train, bus and truck and even swimming across rivers with the children balanced across their shoulders.

Over an eight month period they put as much distance as they could between themselves and the people they feared.



Their money gave out when they reached Durban. Their third child was born here and Durban has now been their home for eleven years.

Anastasio trained as a nurse in the Congo but it has been difficult for her to find work as there are the hurdles of registration to go through to get a Nursing Council Number. She is now applying to study locally is hoping for better job prospects.

Anastasio's three children have benefited from a good education at Addington Primary. The two younger ones are currently in Grade 5 and her son is in G9 at Durban High School.

Anastasio heard about Talk English from her friends at church and is a regular member of the most advanced class. She says the lessons are wonderful and help her a great deal. We enjoy her because of the great vitality she brings to the class and activities.

Shirley Valentine

Janet Whelan & Megan Reuvers

Fundraising is not the easiest of tasks, especially when it takes more time and effort from volunteers who spend plenty of time not only preparing lesson plans but teaching as well!

However, at one stage our funds were looking rather dismal to say the least, so the Talk English team decided to hold a fundraising event.

On cue, KickstArt came to the rescue. The theatre company very kindly offered us a relatively small number of seats at a reduced price to sell for the premier evening of Shirley Valentine.

The novice fundraising team then surprised themselves by selling all the tickets! Our supporters got to enjoy a wonderful performance at the Sneddon Theatre.

Our grateful thanks go to Steven and Greg of KickstArt for supporting us and for giving us the badly needed kickstart to our fundraising programme.

Piloting to success

A successful basic English pilot programme was designed and run by Talk English teachers and funded by Refugee Social Services. This course aimed to give vulnerable refugee women basic English "survival" skills. Due to positive feedback from students and RSS three more courses are currently running. One class has already graduated and received certificates for attending the course. More classes will hopefully be organized for late 2009.



Talk English Library

Sandra Smith

11 October 2008 saw a new development at our Saturday workshops when we launched the Talk English Library. We opened with whatever books and recent magazines we could lay our hands on, some discarded from libraries, others donated by members and their friends. Our aim was to enable the students to practise their English during the week and we have been delighted with the enthusiasm with which the students have taken up the opportunity. The service is free and we already have over twenty students signed on as members.

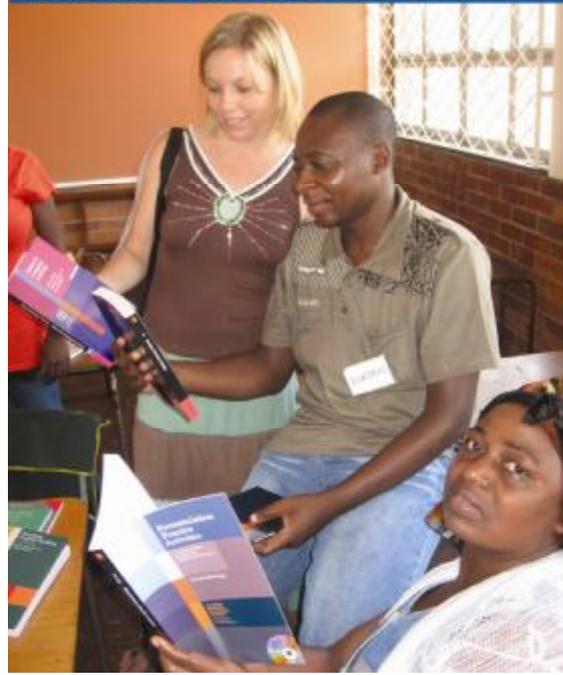
The library has added another dimension to our work and as a librarian I love the buzz round the table while students choose their books. They use the library in different ways. One student chooses books that she can share with her children, another likes the romances while one student was so fascinated by his book on ships and seafarers that he brought lists of words to class to have explained by his teacher.

In 2009 we aim to offer a wider range of material and therefore would be grateful for any donations from well-wishers and friends of Talk English. Please contact Talk English if you can help us expand our library.

We'd like to Thank:

- The British Cultural and Heritage Association (for the wonderful teaching resource books)
- Adams Campus Books (for organising books and discounts)
- Addington Primary School (for use of their classrooms)
- Nivea/Beiersdorf (for the Christmas presents)
- The Umhlatuzana Rotary Club (for continued support)
- Our volunteers (for their time and enthusiasm)

Teacher Resource Books



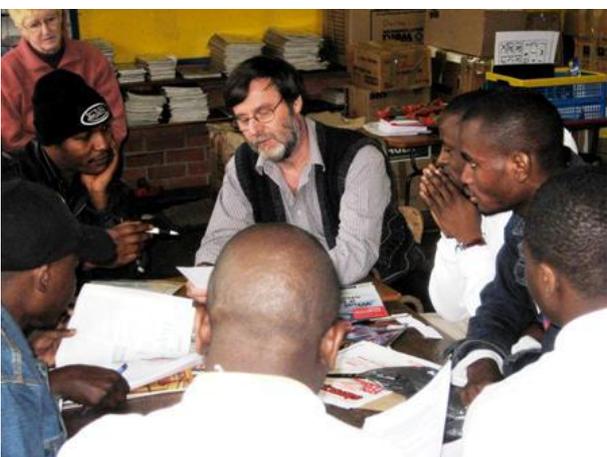
Sponsorship Opportunities

Talk English is still looking for funding for various projects. Currently our wish list is as follows:

- Sponsorship for student dictionaries
- Sponsorship for juice and biscuits
- CD player
- Sponsorship for running costs (printing, photocopying, petrol, telephone)
- Someone to design a website for us!

Talk English also has a profile listed on the GreaterGood South Africa website (www.myggsa.co.za) which connects good causes with volunteers, sponsors and donations.

This organization also helped us in organizing a "Do-it-Day". Robin Miller, our volunteer for the GreaterGood South Africa Do-it-Day, came to help our students with practical CV writing advice.



Should you wish to make any donations our banking details are below:

Talk English
Standard Bank
Gale Place Branch
201 Umbilo Road, Durban, 4001
Account Number: 051152487
Branch Code: 042526
SWIFT Code: SBZA ZA JJ

*Talk English Contact Details: Julie Douglas: +27(0)31-2057753, jdouglas@netactive.co.za
Nicole Rimensberger: +27 82 696 7538 nicole.rimensberger@gmail.com*