**A review of KLS’ ESOL (English) programme**

**2019-2023**

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*“Before I came to KLS, I didn’t like education, I was frightened of it. Now I can’t wait to go to class and I realize I can learn. I really want to thank KLS for that.”*

This paper reviews Katherine Low Settlement’s English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programme over the last 3.5 academic years. Our ESOL programme has been generously supported by the National Lottery Community Fund and Wandsworth Council’s Lifelong Learning Department; as well as by our fabulous volunteers and partners giving their time, commitment and passion to support our amazing students. Without your support we would not have been able to make such a difference to so many people’s lives. Thank you.

1. **About Katherine Low Settlement**

Katherine Low Settlement (KLS) is a busy charity that has been serving Battersea and the wider Wandsworth community since 1924. We are dedicated to building stronger communities and enable people to challenge and find ways out of poverty and isolation.

We run a range of our own community programmes to support children, young people and their families, older people, women and refugee communities. We campaign for social change. We also incubate and support small charities and social businesses to start-up and thrive. A passionate, committed and skilled team of 38 staff and 200 volunteers regularly make a difference to about 5% of the local population in Battersea.

Visit: [www.klsettlement.org.uk](http://www.klsettlement.org.uk)

1. **The Need for ESOL courses in Wandsworth**

*“My English skills have improved. Now I’m happy. When I go to the GP I can solve my problem because now I can speak and communicate. In the beginning it was very hard for me. Now I’ve got more confidence in the shop I work in.”*

Language is the key that unlocks an integrated, fulfilled life in the UK. Without it, people arriving in Britain are unable to work, to make friends, even to go to the doctor or get on a bus. Having reached safety, people want to build a new life here. Knowing how to speak English is absolutely essential for this; for a life where refugees can fully participate and fully contribute.

The 2011 Census measured Wandsworth’s population at 307,000, of which 108,573 (35.3%) were non-UK born. In London alone, research has identified over 300 Languages spoken by children at home (Children England, 2013; Census, 2021). Wandsworth ranked 24 in the top districts in England and Wales for percentage of population in the Language Needs Indicator, 2001; with 39,265 adults (17% of the adult, working population in Wandsworth) with language needs (Census, 2011).

There is a real demand for ESOL services in Wandsworth and across London. KLS’ answer to this has been to continue to grow and develop our ESOL programme over the last three and a half years, so we can support a larger number of adult learners, across a range of English proficiency levels.

*“London needs ESOL… Being able to speak English not only enables people to get jobs, it also encourages integration and a cohesive society, develops family capital and improves health and wellbeing.”* GLA, 2012; London Enriched Strategy, 2013

1. **About KLS’ ESOL programme**

Katherine Low Settlement has a strong track record of providing ESOL community courses since 1999. We provide **free English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses for** migrant and refugee communities in Wandsworth. This enables our students to improve their English literacy and language across the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. We significantly revitalised our ESOL and adult education offer from 2014 and have not looked back. We support around 100 adult learners each year.

**a. Target Group**

*'I took my E3 Writing exam in the summer and passed, I felt confident enough to take the test. It is thanks to my teachers who believe in me and help me to believe in myself.”*

We focus on working with:

* People living in areas of deprivation in London Borough of Wandsworth (principally from Battersea communities)
* Members of BAME groups, prioritising newly-arrived refugees and asylum seekers
* Learners with crèche-age children
* Learners without a full level 2 qualification

Over the last 3.5 years we have taught just over 100 students each year:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** |
| No. of Students | 103 | 98 | 105 | 112 |
| Retention – finishers | 87%  (n.90) | 81%  (n.79) | 86%  (n.90) | - |

Our students come from the local community in Battersea and across Wandsworth. Some of their children attend our homework and holiday clubs too, and many attend our parent workshops we run on a Friday with our Love to Learn education team.

Our students live on low incomes and in poverty, struggle with English and to integrate into the wider local community. The vast majority are women (90%+). Our youngest student is 21 and eldest 71 years old. The average age is 39. They come from 31 different nationalities. Most are from refugee communities.

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Locally, we are the only centre offering free ESOL classes regardless of economic, immigration status or language ability. All other ESOL providers restrict access to their courses – mainly due to funder restrictions.

**b. Courses and qualifications**

We currently offer 9 classes each week for learners with different levels of English, including:

* Pre-Entry
* E1/E2
* E2
* E3
* L1
* along with Maths, IT and a new Employability class.

Most of our learners take exams and gain a nationally recognised certificate with NOCN (National Open College Network). Read on for more details.

**c. Outcomes**

*“I feel like my listening and understanding of English has improved. I like everything about the class.”*

We work hard to achieve the following differences in our students lives.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Difference /**  **Outcomes** | **Annual Targets** | **2019/20**  **Actuals** | **2020/21**  **Actuals** | **2021/22**  **Actuals** | **Notes** |
| Improve their English literacy and language skills across speaking, listening, reading and writing | 80% of learners who sit an exam achieve a nationally recognised certificate (NOCN) | 96% | 89% | 79% | Attendance & Covid affected exam readiness |
| Increase their confidence by using their new English skills in ‘real life’, out in the community | 90% of learners will increase their confidence | 91% | 95% | 95% |  |
| Reduce isolation by making better connections through new friendships and relationships | 95% social contact with other people at least once a week | 100% | 95% | 95% |  |
| 95% strengthen their informal network with class mates, neighbours, and KLS staff & vols | 100% | 98% | 98% |  |
| Be able to better support their children with their homework, education and relationship with local schools | 80% (of those with children) report being able to support their children’s education | 80% | 80% | 80% |  |
| Progress into further education and employment | 10% progress each year | 6% | 8% | 13% |  |

In addition to qualifications there have been a number of other tangible benefits that our students have achieved including:

***Increasing in confidence and self-*esteem.** Our students are able to use their improved English skills in 'real life', out in the community - see the case studies and quotes throughout this report.

***Making new friendships and widening their social networks*.** Their children have also got to know one another through their time in the crèche.

***Increasing the education support they are now able to give their children at home with their homework.*** They have reported being more engaged in their children’s education e.g. attending parents evening and being able to engage with teachers more.

***Increasing their involvement in other community organisations.*** Our students are more involved with, for example, their children's schools, faith organisations, community centres, migrant support charities etc., because they are developing their English skills, which in turn has improved their confidence and self-esteem.

***Getting through the pandemic.*** It has been a difficult time for our students. We have been able to support each other through this crisis.See below for more on this.

***Increased participation with local partnerships.*** Students are using the connections KLS has fostered with other charities and partners and are getting involved in other projects in the local area.

**d. Our creche enables students with young children to study**

*“For me everything is going well. The teachers are kind. I also like it because my daughter is taken care of in the crèche when I study. She is happy to come to KLS. When I come to classes, I learn something new every time.”*

We provide a free creche (on site) for those students with young children (pre-school), which around 25% of our students use. Many of our students were able to study as their children were being well looked after in our on-site crèche. It is run by an experienced team of staff and volunteers (many of whom are former students).

Students have told us that without the crèche they would not have been able to attend classes. The local college (South Thames College) does not provide a crèche and this is a massive barrier to women particularly attending. Women make up the vast majority of our students. Their pre-school children have benefited too, as they are supported by our multi-lingual crèche staff and volunteers who will speak in English and their own language (Somali, Tigrinya, Albanian etc.) settling them into formal childcare and preparing them for primary school.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** |
| Children accessing our ESOL crèche | 33 | 22 | 42 | 43 |
| No. of Students | 103 | 98 | 105 | 112 |
| % of Students who need childcare, without which they could not study | 32% | 22% | 40% | 38% |

**e. Oversubscribed classes / Recruitment**

KLS has well established links and relationships with Battersea and communities across Wandsworth – especially refugee families and those in so called ‘hard to reach’ communities. We have a multi-lingual team of staff and volunteers who speak most local languages including Somali, Arabic, Tigrinya, Turkish, Italian, Spanish and French.

We recruit mainly through ‘word of mouth’ but are oversubscribed, such is the demand. We are over capacity by around 30% each year. We signpost and refer students to other ESOL providers where possible. However, most organisations close their admissions for the year in October. We also open a Waiting List group in January each year, where students can attend one class each week, so at least they are learning some English before we can offer them a full place the following September. KLS could do more if it had increased funding, staff and volunteers to provide more of its high-quality ESOL services for local people in Battersea and the wider Wandsworth community.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** |
| No. of Students | 103 | 98 | 105 | 112 |
| No. who join our Waiting List class | 25 | 30 | 27 | 23 |
| No. referred onto other providers | 8 | 2 | 5 | 1 |

**f. Student-centred education at our core**

Student-centred education is at the core of our ESOL programme. Students know that they will be listened to and their ideas, suggestions and improvements will be incorporated into our work. As part of their courses, all students complete course evaluations at the end of every term so that we can monitor how everything is going.

Our ‘Scheme of Work’ is an emerging one where teachers record ideas for future classes into a scheme of work that is a working document and not a fixed plan. This purpose-led teaching approach is very important to the way we work and enables us to respond to learners’ immediate concerns and interests. We also believe that an "emerging" fluid programme more closely supports language acquisition than a linear "building-block" approach which does not really relate to how languages are learnt.

**g. Exams and Qualifications**

*“Thanks to KLS, I have now passed my ‘Life In The UK’ test. I have wanted to do this for a few years, but because I took my E3 Writing exam in the summer and passed (!), I felt confident enough to take the test. It is thanks to my teachers who believe in me and help me to believe in myself.”*

All students, should they wish, can take exams and gain a nationally recognised certificate with NOCN (National Open College Network). However due to the Pandemic we had to adapt our exams approach.

In 2020 we were in Lockdown and had to run (like most schools) teacher assessed ‘calculated results’, not exams as usual. We were not able to hold face-to-face exams as planned. Since KLS has a modest income and it costs us to enter each student for an exam, we took the decision early on to only enter students that we were sure of achieving and who had been able to engage in some form or other with online study. This has meant a lower quantity of exams entered, but a higher achievement rate.

In 2021, most of the preparation period was spent under lockdown conditions and it soon became clear that we would again have to limit numbers taking recognised qualifications. Unlike schools, the Further Education sector was not given the option to rely on teacher assessed grades (TAGS). TAGS were only expected to be awarded under exceptional circumstances and with extensive evidence. Thus, we had two options: either deliver online assessments or plan for in-person assessments.

As a team we agreed that online assessment was not a fair medium for our cohort. So we decided to run live assessments for those most likely to gain a qualification. At the time we were still not running face to face classes and it became clear that the students who had ‘engaged’ fully, measured by attendance and completion of homework and coursework, were most likely to engage with the exam process. We could run a ‘safer’ assessment season, bringing in small groups of students for mocks and actual exams.

We are extremely proud of all of our students, not just those who have achieved formal, measurable qualifications. We are proud of the whole cohort, who have faced a difficult situation with courage, stoicism and patience.

In 2022, to everyone’s relief, we were able to return to in-person exams again.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** |
| Exam results – passed (n.)  (for students in Entry 1, 2, 3, Level 1 English SFL; E2, E3, L1, L2 Functional skills Maths) | 54 students achieved a  ‘calculated result’ instead of exams (Covid related) | 50 students achieved a NOCN exam qualification  (reduced no.’s due to Covid) | 83 students achieved a NOCN exam qualification | Preparations are underway |
| No. of students who chose to sit an exam | 56 | 50 | 87 |  |

**h. Developing Extracurricular Activities**

One of the things that has come out of evaluations in recent years is the students are more interested in language progression than in formal qualifications. Although some are still interested in gaining qualifications, because they need that marker of success, or because they have an intended career path for which they will need Maths and English, everyone recognises the benefits of what are often deemed ‘soft skills’ that can’t be measured by a qualification.

Our students want to apply their English outside the classroom, in the real world. They want to recover and get fit after the Lockdowns. They want to try new things and learn new skills. They want to improve their friendships and social networks. For this reason we have developed our programme to include a range of employability and extracurricular activities, including yoga, dance, fitness and exercise, cooking, photography, sewing, pottery, cycling, a book club and Discover London. We will continue to grow, evolve and adapt these with our students.

We are steering the focus of our education programme away from exam results being the main measure of success. See below for more detail.

**i. Moving onto further education and employment**

We are conscious that our students live on low incomes, mostly in poverty. The more able they are to work and bring in additional income into the household the better, and/or to progress into further education to gain further qualifications, which in turn will enable them to find better paid work.

Most of our students stay with us on average 3-5 years. They generally improve sufficiently to move up a class each year. And as the table shows below some leave us to move into further education and employment.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** |
| Students moving onto further education and employment | 6%  (n.6) | 8%  (n.8) | 13%  (n.14) | - |

We are developing our top level (L1) class next year to provide more focused support for our students to progress beyond KLS.

**Member Story – Sahar moving into employment**

Sahar came to KLS as a new mother, having heard from a friend that we run ESOL classes. She came from a traditional Sri Lankan background, where girls’ education was not compulsory or prioritized and although she was living with a supportive husband, it was expected that she would be the one to stay home and look after the family. However, a free creche was all it took to liberate her from 24/7 homemaking and she jumped at the chance to study English four hours a week.

Sahar studied hard and improved quickly, moving from Entry 2 to Level 1 in a couple of years. Her son flourished in the creche and after a break for a second baby to be born, Sahar returned with renewed passion for a future career working with children. She then studied on the childcare course that was running alongside her ESOL class. She achieved her Level 1 Introduction to Early years qualification as well as Functional Skills Maths and English at Level 2. This gave her the confidence to apply to a Teaching Assistant course at South Thames College.

Sahar is now working full time at a Wandsworth Primary school, as a Teaching assistant, where she often teaches the class when the teacher is planning lessons.

1. **Achievements (2019 - To Date)**

This review shares our findings into how we operate, what we have achieved, the difference we’ve made and identifies areas for improvement.

**Table1: Overview of KLS’ ESOL programme**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** |
| No. of Students | 103 | 98 | 105 | 112 |
| Retention – finishers | 87%  (n.90) | 81%  (n.79) | 86%  (n.90) | - |
| No. who join our Waiting List class | 25 | 30 | 27 | 23 |
| No. referred to other providers | 8 | 2 | 5 | 1 |
| No. of Courses | 9 | 8 | 9 | 9 |
| No. of Extracurricular Activities | 1 | 0 | 6 | 4 |
| Study places | 160 | 170 | 182 | 158 |
| Exam results – passed (n.)  (for students in Entry 1, 2, 3, Level 1 English SFL; E2, E3, L1, L2 Functional skills Maths) | 54 students achieved a  ‘calculated result’ instead of exams (Covid related) | 50 students achieved a NOCN exam qualification  (reduced no.’s due to Covid) | 83 students achieved a NOCN exam qualification | - |
| Students moving onto further education and employment | 6%  (n.6) | 8%  (n.8) | 13%  (n.14) | - |
| Children accessing the crèche | 33 | 22 | 42 | 43 |
| No. of Staff | 10 | 9 | 10 | 9 |
| No. of Volunteers | 32 | 15 | 33 | 36 |

1. **Annual Review**

What follows is a short review of each year.

A collage of people

Description automatically generated with low confidence

Figure 1: Zoom classes during Covid were a lifeline for many

**Year 1 – 2019/20**

*“I look forward to my classes on Zoom twice a week. I get to talk to other people from my family and I get to see all my lovely classmates and my lovely teacher. I also learn English and Maths!”*

This was not a ‘normal’ year for our ESOL programme. In March 2020 (half-way through the academic year) Covid-19 interrupted us just when we were starting to prepare for exams. However, thanks to our amazing team of teachers and some very dedicated volunteers, our classes were rapidly adapted to online learning through a variety of mediums: WhatsApp, Google Classroom, Zoom, 1:1 phone calls and sending out work packs through the good old postal system!

*“I didn’t want to do online learning. I felt bad. I didn’t understand and I stopped coming to classes. My teacher called me and I came to KLS. She showed me how to use a laptop, I took it home and then I came to all my classes. My teacher, she is so patient she makes me relax. Now I am proud of myself and my teacher is proud of me. I have passed all my Entry 3 exams.”*

**Digital Exclusion during Lockdown**

Early during the first Lockdown, we ran a survey with all the students to find out the scope of digital access and found the following.

Out of 97 students who responded:

* Only 1 - had access to their own computer.
* 33 – had access to a shared computer with anything up to 6 household member sharing it, but only 11 were able to attend an online classes because of their children taking priority to attend school online.
* 64 – accessed online learning and could do homework on a smart phone.
* 15 – had no online access at all.

Fortuitously, at the request of our students, we had already introduced a new IT skills classes for 30 students in September 2019. For some this was the first time they had used a computer. This proved to be timely with the onset of the Pandemic, as all classes had to be moved online in a matter of days.

We had to be flexible and adapt how we delivered our classes, as well as the content. We were not allowed to meet in person during the Lockdown restrictions. So we change to provide 1:1 support or in small groups making sure everyone could engage with the technology and devices they had to hand (if at all). Some were really resistant and anxious at first, but with the encouragement of patient and engaging teachers, everyone with access to technology grew in confidence over the months of Lockdown. We taught our students a range of new digital skills ranging from sharing photos and documents on their phones, to setting parental controls on smart TV’s , and applying for courses at a local Further Education college.

Online classes were simpler to set up for the second lockdown. The students were far more confident with the format this time and were ready. All classes had access to:

* A class WhatsApp group for sharing class news, zoom links and peer to peer support
* Google classroom for class materials and homework
* Physical learning materials to pick up at the beginning of the wee

This resulted in a very good attendance rate amongst the higher-level classes - digital literacy often runs hand in hand with language literacy.

One bonus to the students learning to use Zoom is that it has opened up contact with families abroad for many of them. They have now been able to show their families how to use it from as far away as Afghanistan.

A person standing next to a red van

Description automatically generated with medium confidenceWe fundraised for 24 laptops for our students by October 2020, and a further 30 by January 2021. This meant that after our second Lockdown closure in November 2020, more than 60% of our students had access to a KLS laptop for their classes, with a further 25% sharing devices with their families and the remaining 13% more comfortable using their smartphones. We only had 3 students who neither had access to a laptop nor a smartphone, but all of these were due to a lack of interest in engaging with digital technology. We now have a laptop lending library with 55 devices and continue to run digital skills classes.

Figure 2: Fran, our ESOL Manager, taking delivery of our first laptops for our laptop lending library

**Year 2 – 2020/21**

*“I want say thanks to all my teachers and KLS to give me online lessons in Covid time.”*

In September 2020 we started the academic year with face-to-face classes - adjusting our teaching to Covid restrictions: desks 2 metres apart; larger classes split to avoid overcrowding with a blended learning approach (once we had worked out ways to do this); students picking up worksheets at appointed times when unable to attend in person; ensuring all students had a gmail email address, could access Google Classroom and were trained to use Zoom in the event of further closures (which happened); and 1:1 laptop training for students.

A group of people sitting at desks in a room

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Figure 3: Blended learning during Covid restrictions

**Year 3 – 2021/22**

This year we were delighted to be able to return fully to teaching in the classroom. Following two years of Covid disruption and bearing in mind research on the effects of the Pandemic on health as a whole, this was the right moment to introduce new extracurricular activities for Body and Mind, furthering the KLS holistic approach. This enabled our students to apply their English from the classroom in the real world, whilst learning new skills, trying new activities and building their confidence. This coincided with many new volunteers coming forward, who helped us deliver these. We offered:

* Crochet, knitting and mixed media art – 4-6 week courses for up to 10 students
* Machine sewing – rolling course for up to 10 students
* Yoga – rolling course for up to 20 students
* ‘Keep Fit’ fitness – rolling courses for up to 20 female-only students
* Book group – rolling course for up to 10 students
* Discover London – pairing students with volunteers to explore London together and practice their English in the real world. Capacity depends on the number of volunteers we have (currently 13)

We also piloted a new employability course with long term partner, South Thames College. The Pandemic impoverished our students further. Many in their households lost jobs, were put on furlough and went further into debt. As our students were asking for more help to find work we have run a pilot employability course. We are going to focus more of our efforts on this in future years.

**Volunteer Story – Djedjiga**

One volunteer, Djedjiga, returned to us this year after a few years absence. She was eager to use the skills she had learnt in her CELTA course to run her own group: the lower-level Waiting List group starting in January 2021.

Djedjiga liaised with the ESOL manager closely and they worked together to develop a Scheme of Work which she delivered to a group of 10 students (Entry 1-2) once a week, online, for the spring term. Her confidence grew weekly which was a pleasure to observe. She was happy to take on new ideas; work with multi-level learners; and master online learning tools. The result was that students engaged well, had very good attendance and bonded well as a group. This was even better when they started face to face classes in May.

Djedjiga is a Second Language English speaker, who having grown up in Algeria and France speaks several languages and has a good understanding of intercultural issues. Her empathy for the students is palpable and she has a quiet patience. All of these things make her an engaging teacher.

As a result of her success, Djedjiga has accepted the challenge to teach the IT for ESOL courses next academic year (three courses running once a week for six weeks). This will be a good way to widen the scope of her experience. She will be well supported by the team.

**Year 4 – 2022/23**

Our English, Maths and IT classes continue as normal. And we are continuing to offer and develop a range of extracurricular activities particularly fitness, yoga and Discover London.

However the Pandemic is continuing to impact on our students and our classes. Attendance is definitely lower. Students are not able to attend for a variety of reasons: off sick (including long Covid), having to look after sick children at home, overseas travel to look after ill family members, housing issues, school closures, stricter Benefit requirements (Universal Credit increased requirement to search for more work and accompanying sanctions).

Sadly, post-Covid we are seeing a lot of relationship and family breakdowns which is affecting the mental health of our members and all areas of their lives. Anxiety is also very prevalent, especially amongst the Afghans and Somalis whose families still living in their birth country are facing renewed uncertainty with the worsening situations . Similarly issues with immigration and public perceptions of this, post-Brexit and the 2022 Nationality and Borders Act, are also having a detrimental effect. Although these issues may not seem to be issues that affect attendance, this affects the invisible consequences of mental health issues on already vulnerable people.

We are not alone. Other ESOL providers are telling us they are experiencing the same difficulties with their students.

**Member Story – Amina**

Amina is from Somalia, has been in the UK for more than 20 years and has brought up her five children here. Amina has been coming to KLS for a number of years and has progressed slowly but surely both in confidence and language acquisition. She gained a Level 1 certificate two years ago on our Childcare course and has since been working as a valued member of the ESOL crèche team. She is a softly spoken woman with a strong presence.

During the winter lockdown the ESOL department partnered with the National Literacy Trust (NLT) to run an Early Years Together pilot project with Somali mothers and their pre-school children. This had to be adapted from the original face to face concept to being delivered online. This is where Amina shone. She recruited all the parents from her local networks to take part; she helped with training the parents for online delivery; she translated for both sides of the language divide and made sure that engagement remained high. It was a very successful pilot which is now being adapted and rolled out to different communities by the NLT. Amina was also able to see herself in a new light – as a community organiser and able to hold her own in English speaking situations.

Other interesting projects that Amina was involved in this year – promoting Covid Safety to the Somali community in a film made at KLS for Wandsworth Council. Following on from that Amina also co-scripted, translated into Somali and starred in, a short film allaying the fears around and promoting the benefits of the Covid Vaccination.

**Looking ahead**

One area we are developing further is our Level 1 class. We have identified a post-Level 1 bottleneck where students are continuing with classes at KLS despite having good language skills because they are unsure where to go next. They need guidance on further education, employment and/or self-employment. Previously, we have run employability sessions but we would like to integrate this into Level 1 classes in 2023/24.

Throughout the 36 week course, we would offer a Where Next? programme of formal writing and professional skills e.g. CVs, presentations, to help them prepare for their futures. We have good relationships with local businesses who are keen to offer our students advice and work experience (e.g. Battersea Power Station, Tideway). We would also like to create opportunities for job shadowing with KLS staff in a range of roles. We hope this approach will guide our students to take those next steps into further education, employment and self-employment.

1. **Extracurricular activities and partnership working**

*“I don’t have any friends in the UK, and I have been here for five years. I only started classes four weeks ago, but I already have new friends I can talk to and share my problems. I am so happy.”*

Our extracurricular activities and partnership work is a key part of our ESOL programme. It enables us to provide an enriched curriculum for our students.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** |
| No. of Extracurricular Activities | 1 | 0 | 6 | 4 |

Here are some examples:

**a. Cooking project**

In partnership with Z2K, Waste Not Want Not and local volunteer Jeanette, we were able to offer a healthy vegetarian cooking workshop for 4 of our students each week, from the beginning of 2020 until Lockdown. Many of our students are amazing cooks, but didn’t always have the confidence or have the time to risk experimenting with new foods. Thanks to generous donations of really interesting fruit and veg from Hadas at Waste Not Want Not, funding for essentials from Z2K and Jeanette’s imagination and enthusiasm, the students got to make some really interesting and tasty dishes .There was always enough food for the students to take home to share with their families and even better, the staff at KLS got to eat as well! This is an important project that will continue when we are able.

A group of women in a kitchen

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Figure 4: Cooking up a treat

**b. NHS Covid vaccination programme**

Through a thorough education programme delivered by all our tutors, we managed to have a 95% Covid vaccination uptake rate amongst our student cohort.

Watch this short film our students made: <https://youtu.be/KiAi1O0f5G4>.This was shared on social media and across Wandsworth Council and Wandsworth NHS networks to encourage local residents to have the vaccine.

**c. CV workshop with AS Watson Group**

Over the last three years we have been on a journey to support our students to progress into further education and employment. As an example, 10 volunteers from AS Watson Group who visited in October and ran two CV writing workshops with our higher-level students. Each pair of students were able to work on a bespoke CV which these experienced professionals helped them put together. For some this was the first time they had seen their achievements put together in a CV.

One student, M, who had been wanting to change her job for some time, immediately sent off her CV to several companies she wanted to work for and had two interviews in the coming weeks. Although she is still looking, she feels really positive and has gained a lot of experience from those interviews that she will be able to use in the future.

**d. Climate change studies**

Our E3-L2 students acquired a lot of their language studies through immersion in a year-long project on the subject of Climate Change. Though aware of some issues, the pressures of bringing up families in a country with a different language (as well as all the other pressures of being a migrant), much of the present zeitgeist was beyond their experience and grasp. The subjects they focused on were food, clothing and pollution and the effects of our consumption of these on the planet. Studying a lot of new vocabulary alongside encouragement to watch and listen to the news in English, the students were excited and empowered to believe that they had the ability to change the future and get involved in community action.

Reusable Theatre shared one of their actors with us for the afternoon – Rosanna did an improvisation workshop with our students which we followed up by taking several students to see their play “This play will change your life” at City Lit in December.

Steve from Extinction Rebellion came and ran a seminar with the students on the effects of climate change and the changes we can all make to our consumption habits.

**e. Thomas School Year 9’s Conversation classes.**

In spring, Thomas’ school Year 9’s, visited every Thursday for a half hour conversation session in groups with our Entry 3 class. Each week they chose a different subject – mobile phones, gaming, sport, religion etc. and came prepared with lots of questions for the students. They were thoroughly engaging, erudite and interesting. It was a great opportunity for our students to meet children who were often the same age as their own, but from different cultures and experience, and to have the opportunity to have a proper conversation with them. The students had the chance to hear the opinions and feelings of children (who weren’t their own) and have a really good conversation about issues that affect them all. They were also amazed at the children’s confidence! A really successful project that we hope we can repeat in the future.

**f. Screening of “Sky and Ground”**

The director of Sky and Ground, Talya Tibbon, let KLS host a charitable screening of her powerful documentary, followed by a Q&A. The ESOL students made it a hugely successful evening by putting on an amazing spread of food and many of them were on hand to talk to visitors. We raised nearly £1,000 for KLS.

**g. Advice from our partners**

Citizens Advice Bureau ran a bespoke advice session for our students on Settled and Pre-Settled status for those of our students with EU passports.

South West London Law Centre ran four well attended finance workshops on important subjects like Universal Credit; paying bills; budgeting and saving money.

SW Leap ran energy workshops to help students reduce their utility bills, run more environmentally efficient households and know where to get support and advice.

These workshops have been useful as the cost of living crisis has escalated.

**h.** **Discover London**

Discover London is project to enable our students to get the most out of the capital. Students are paired with a local volunteer and together they go out and discover the wonders that London has to offer – as well as practice their English together!

RK came to us as a nearly 70 year old, having retired in her home country of Latvia, now living with her daughter in Battersea, helping to raise her grandchildren. She was very nervous before she came to us, believing her daughter’s words that she was ‘terrible’ at English. She has now been with us for five years and is in the highest level class and her confidence is palpable. However she has no opportunity to speak English outside of the classroom.

RK recently joined our Discover London project and this has transformed her experience. During her 1-1 Individual Learning Plan (ILP) meeting in June, this is what she said *“Thank you so much for Discover London - it is fantastic! I went with my volunteer Jill to Covent Garden and I saw so many different places. Even better than that, we were together for four hours and I had to talk English for the whole four hours. When I made a mistake, she corrected me - It was so good for me. Thank you, thank you.”*

**Here are some more examples about our extracurricular activities and feedback from our students:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A picture containing timeline  Description automatically generatedGraphical user interface, text, application, chat or text message  Description automatically generated with medium confidence | *“Knitting is hard. I have to use my hands in a new way, but now I have learnt a new skill” KA*  *“ I like eating biscuits and talking to other students I never met before” SM*  *“I will try and teach my daughter to knit in the holidays. Please can we do it again?” KD*  *“I’m so proud of myself. I made my own bag and I can bring my folder in to classes” BG* |
| Diagram  Description automatically generatedText  Description automatically generated | *“I need to get fit. There is no women’s fitness locally that is convenient for me. I haven’t got money to join a gym. I look forward to fitness every week. After every day I feel stronger.” SS*  *“I wasn’t going to come to yoga because I don’t know what yoga is. My teacher said to me to try one class and now I love it. I feel peaceful and it helps my back pain” NS* |
| Text, Word, website  Description automatically generated with medium confidenceText  Description automatically generated | *“ I like meeting the group and talking about stories and about stories about my family” SS*  *“Thank you to KLS for all the things you do for us. Discover London is wonderful. I see parts of London I never see before and my volunteer is so kind.” NS*  *“Can we keep doing it next year?” ZB* |
|  |  |

1. **Activism**

A large majority of our students come from a refugee background. It is an important topic to discuss both for the students’ to give each other moral support and for the other students who come from less perilous backgrounds to learn about where their colleagues come from.

During 2021/22 At KLS we got involved in the Together with Refugees campaign project. All students were given the opportunity to write a sentence about what ‘safety’ means to them, all of which formed part of an ‘orange heart’ display (a symbol of solidarity and hope for refugees) in our external noticeboards, on the front of our building.

We also made a banner to demonstrate our solidarity with refugees which we then took up to the Houses of Parliament. The MP for Battersea, Marsha De Cordova, met with a group of our students inside Parliament and talked about the importance of what they were doing and what she was doing on their behalf as their MP. The students were then able to go inside the Commons and watch the debate on the Borders Bill. The students were beyond excited to go home and tell their families what they had done. Citizenship in action.

1. **Extra learning resources**

**a. ESOL Library**

In 2021 we managed to get a small ESOL library started where students can borrow a range of books to read at home with their families. All students are encouraged to borrow a book regularly. We have trained several students as volunteer librarians. This followed on from the National Literacy Trust project that we ran last year, where our crèche team worked with young families encouraging them to see the possibilities for stimulating literacy in their young children with books of all languages.

**b. 21st Century teaching tools**

We were very excited about installing a new SmartBoard into one of our classrooms. It has been a fantastic investment. It has helped with engagement, accommodating different learning styles and making classes more productive. Another generous donor has stepped forward and paid for a second SmartBoard, which is being installed in March 2023.

1. **And finally, our Staff and Volunteer Team**

We could not have done all of this without our experienced and highly qualified team of staff and volunteers who run our ESOL programme. They work really well together. We have:

* 4 qualified and experienced ESOL teachers
* 1 partner teacher from South Thames College
* 4 creche staff (some of who are former students)
* 1 part-time administrator
* A team of around 30 dedicated volunteers who help out in our:
  + *Classrooms:* Teachers and Teaching Assistants, providing one-to-one or small group support for students as needed
  + *Creche:* supporting our creche staff, learning new skills and giving back for other students to be able to attend classes
  + *Discover London*: students are matched with a volunteer to explore London together. This might be visiting a tourist attraction, a park, a museum or art gallery for a morning, practising their English in the real world.

Some of our volunteers are students themselves either giving something back or developing their English and childcare skills by volunteering in the crèche. Others are local residents wanting to use their professional skills and expertise in an ESOL setting with refugees and other BAME communities.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** | **2022/23** |
| No. of Staff | 10 | 9 | 10 | 9 |
| No. of Volunteers (incl. teachers, creche, extracurricular support) | 32 | 15 | 33 | 36 |

**Volunteer story – AK learning English and becoming an apprentice**

AK came to KLS as a student in 2018, also studying on the childcare course that was running at the time. Over the next two years she achieved Childcare Level 1 and Functional Skills English Level 1. AK is quite reticent and had lost a lot of confidence having been a stay at home parent for 8 years. It was only during online lockdown sessions that we came to realise she had an amazing talent for crochet, when she showed us the dolls she had been making. With encouragement from her teacher and her classmates, she started an online business selling her dolls.

AK really wanted to work in a school as a Teaching Assistant. We helped her to apply to South Thames College to study on their TA course, where she flourished, rising to the challenges of writing detailed reports in English.

AK was keen to thank KLS, so returned to teach a beginners crochet course to 8 students who completed a small purse. AK gained a lot of confidence teaching others and went on to get an apprenticeship at a Wandsworth nursery, working in the sector she loves.

*“I have to say I really appreciate all the help that KLS gave it to me because one of the reasons (I got this job) is KLS help. I always will be happy to help you if I can. And I love my job working with children!”* AK, February 2022

Volunteers are the lifeblood of Katherine Low Settlement. We simply cannot operate our wide range of services without the support of our amazing team of dedicated volunteers. Extensive research has shown that whilst paid staff are vital to provide the consistency, stability and targeted skills necessary for a charity to function, it is through volunteers that our reach is extended, the quality of service enriched and community bonds strengthened.

Staff have attended a number of CPD (Continuing Professional Development) and trainings over the last three years with English for Action, NATECLA, Institute of Education and Wandsworth Council.

**Volunteers give excellent Value for Money**

Our wonderful ESOL volunteers contribute their time in-kind. If we monetised their contribution to a wage equivalent it would be £29,154 for 2021/22 (using ONS recognised volunteer calculator). This is the equivalent of another full-time member of paid staff.

1. **Conclusion**

*“I am so happy in your class. I love you my teacher. Thanks for everything. I love you all KLS school.”*

Katherine Low Settlement is in a unique position to offer ESOL and community learning because:

* **We’re education-focused** – our primary objective is to get the best for our people, and it is this that determines the education support we provide. This is our area of expertise, which is provided in a safe, community learning space. We refer on to partner agencies for non-education issues.
* **We’re barrier-free** – anyone can join regardless of economic or immigration status or language ability. There is no complex enrolment processes. We don’t charge fees. We’re based near major transport routes etc.
* **We provide a supportive community beyond the classroom** – with opportunities to expand their horizons and practise their language informally; as part of a local charity that can support their wider needs.
* **We're known and trusted in the community** –we have established a reputation of being a reliable, trustworthy and high-quality source of support. We are known for going the extra mile, working in a respectful and empowering manner that centres on the specific needs of our students and their families. This in turn improves retention and communication.
* **We’re family friendly** – running our classes to fit around school drop off/pick up.
* **We offer free childcare** – this is a priority and we have the facilities. This is not available at most ESOL providers.
* **We have a specialist understanding of the local community** (particularly refugee/migrant) needs. KLS’ diverse and multi-lingual staff and volunteer team reflects the backgrounds of our learners.
* **We are a registered accreditation centre** with NOCN (National Open College Network), so our learners can gain an accredited qualification; and, importantly, if they don’t want one then that’s OK too.
* **We value volunteers** – many of our students volunteer with us. It’s great to practice their English and support our community services.
* **Our classes can be ‘stepping stones’** – into further education and employment.

**One of our class projects in 2021/22 was called ‘Our Story’. Students were asked to write about their own personal lives. Here’s a story from one of our Pre-Entry students:**

I lived in Afghanistan at Kabul which is the Capital city before I came to UK. I lived in a big house and I had a huge family as I lived with my in laws. My in-laws were very kind and loving.

I didn’t have a job because in Afghanistan woman’s don’t have much rights so I was most of the time at home. Growing up in strict household my family didn’t allow me to go to school as in Afghanistan people don’t like it when a girl goes to school therefore I wasn’t allowed to go and unfortunately I don’t have education.

I travelled with my children and my husband. We travelled by airplane from Afghanistan to Dubai and from Dubai to UK. It was a difficult because I was travelling with my children and they were all little and it was my first time as well to travel. When I was coming to the UK I bought a ring that my mum gave me and that ring is very special as she has passed away now, and I bought loads of photos of my in-laws, my sisters, brothers, nieces and nephews.

I had to leave my country because my husband was in the UK which meant that in Afghanistan we were considered as wealthy and as loads of people were poor this meant it was dangerous for my kids and me to be there, as some people who had money were getting kidnapped.

And one of my neighbours daughters were kidnapped because her husband was in the UK as well. This was terrible and me and my husband didn’t think it was safe for us to be there so we had to leave. Arriving in the UK I felt very relieved but also I felt sad because I miss my family very much.

I really like how different culture and different community people are in London. I don’t like the weather in the UK because it can never be trusted and it rains a lot. In the future I want to pass my driving test and learn English so I can support my kids and my family.

1. **Thank you and further information**

Thank you once again for your support.

To discuss this report and our work and/or for further information then please contact Aaron Barbour on 020 7223 2845 and [aaron@klsettlement.org.uk](mailto:aaron@klsettlement.org.uk)

