Being well-versed in English is critical to accessing higher education and employment. Our English Program matches students (adult and youth) with tutors, providing a detailed curriculum and personalized training to ensure success.

The English language is a medium for students and tutors alike to learn about each other, the cultures they come from and the impact of current events on their lives. Our lessons promote cross-cultural exchanges that go beyond the screen, fostering relationships and more profound compassion for those across the globe.

In 2013, Bailey Ulbricht spent two months volunteering in Reyhanli, Turkey, a small town on the Turkish-Syrian border. She met dozens of young college-aged Syrian students desperate to complete their university degrees despite the conflict in Syria. She began Skyping a few of them to help them practice English, and soon, other young Syrian refugees were reaching out to her to request English lessons. Bailey realized she could ask people in her network to volunteer to tutor and found ten tutors from her alma mater, Carleton College, to join her in the first Paper Airplanes English language program in June 2014.

Paper Airplanes continued to grow, and in December 2016, Paper Airplanes received official nonprofit status in the United States. In January 2017, the team expanded to include 25 staff members, and as of June 2019, we have an active staff of 20+, many of whom are former students and tutors.

Paper Airplanes (PA) is a nonprofit organization registered in the USA that matches conflict-affected individuals with personal tutor sessions conducted via video-conferencing platforms such as Zoom, Google meets, etc. We have two programs formed in response to student demand.

Our mission is to bridge gaps in language, higher education, and professional skills training for conflict-affected individuals. By harnessing virtual learning technology and the benefits of peer-to-peer connections, we seek to provide a means of pursuing educational and employment opportunities.

**ENGLISH PROGRAM**

**A Language to Open International Doors**

**HOW IT WORKS**

1. **Match**
   - Once selected, students and tutors are matched based on their language abilities, age, gender, and interests once selected.

2. **Train**
   - Tutors undergo intensive, two-week training on the different crises, working with impacted persons and language pedagogies.

3. **Learn**
   - Matched pairs meet on a platform that works for them for 1.5-hour weekly sessions for 18 weeks, using a custom, four-level curriculum.

4. **Grow**
   - Tutors and staff assist students in preparing a CV and a personal statement and assist them in accessing professional development webinars.

5. **Test**
   - The C1 semester two students will be preparing to take the Duolingo test at the end of the semester.

**HISTORY**

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Paper Airplanes offers two unique English courses to our students.

01. One-on-on Lessons
Comprehensive General English Course comprises a four-level curriculum for beginner to advanced intermediate students. Students have the opportunity to develop their speaking, reading, listening, and writing skills in line with the CEFR guidelines. The curriculum has been designed with the background of our student population in mind. It aims to provide students with basic language skills and skills to develop cultural awareness and prepare them for interviews, jobs and academic studies in English-speaking counties.

02. Speaking Classes
Conversation-focused curriculum which provides students with the opportunity to practice their newly acquired language skills within a group setting. The classes are made up of a group of 4-5 students, with 1-2 tutors who function as facilitators. The curriculum has been designed to compliment and expand upon topics in the 1-1 curriculum. Students practice their grammar and vocabulary through activities such as discussions and debates, based on topics designed to focus on real-world situations. Both curriculums have been designed specifically for Paper Airplanes, with the needs of our students in mind.

The impact is assessed at the end of each semester. These data reflect the impact of the 2022 calendar year.

In 2022, the English Program had 485 students from 25 countries across the Middle East, Africa, and Europe.

General completion rate of the students in Spring 2022

Paper Airplanes prioritizes education for conflict-affected individuals. 83% of 2022 English Program students were either internally displaced or refugees.

When we asked our students to rate their satisfaction with the program, here is what they said:

- Overall Satisfaction: 93%
- PA Team Support: 94%
- Positive Addition to CV: 94%
- Curriculum: 92%
- None of These: 17.3%
- Registered Refugees: 37.7%
- Internally Displaced: 40%
- Unregistered Refugees: 5%
In 2022, English Program had 451 Tutors from 30 countries.

What our volunteers said about the program

**Overall Satisfaction**
89%

**PA Team Support**
90%

**Positive Addition to CV**
100%

The volunteers were 81% females, 17% male, 1% nonbinary/genderqueer, and 1% unknown.

**Overall Satisfaction**
89%

**PA Team Support**
90%

**Positive Addition to CV**
100%

**TESTIMONIALS**

**Lynn Al-Koudmany**
Youth Student

I had the chance to be in Paper Airplane as a student, and this is such a good experience to develop my English Language.

**Rahaf Rabbad**
Youth Student

I joined Paper Airplanes almost a year ago, which has significantly helped me develop my English language. Thanks to the perfect design of the program and the 1-1 tutoring and speaking classes, you are free from pressure and learn without fear. All the staff are well trained and help the students to build a better future. I believe that I can contribute to my country and the whole world by transferring what I have learned at Paper Airplanes. I am so glad to be a student with Paper Airplanes! I am sure that I will never forget this wonderful journey with all the experiences that I learned from it.

**Rama Ballan**
Student

The most remarkable thing about the English Program is that it gives us the chance to talk with native speakers and get to know other students worldwide, benefit from their knowledge and learn about their cultures through conversation groups like a small community.

**Mohammed Zakour**
Student

I believe that if I learn English, I will be able to help my family, my society, and the children of my country... I want to thank all the tutors and employees of Paper Airplanes because they helped me continue my education and are helping me better myself to be able to help my country and help all the people.
I am working with Paper Airplanes because I strongly believe the one thing people can’t take from you is education. I am reminded of how much I should appreciate my privileged position every time I meet my bright-eyed student, who is held back by war and other horrific issues. It inspires me to see everyone’s resilience and excitement towards learning and improving society and acting as a small bridge to help these people reach who they want to give me so much purpose!

My name is Sofia Durrani, and I’ve been a volunteer for Paper Airplanes for over two years. Paper Airplanes has given me the opportunity to connect with students worldwide and make an impact on their lives. Watching my students grow more confident in their English speaking, reading, and writing skills is both inspiring and rewarding. In fact, my students are also making a difference in my life, inspiring me to become a future educator. The experience has made me realize just how much I enjoy helping students. Like a paper airplane, I like to see my students soar in their learning. I’m excited to make a difference in their lives, one lesson at a time.

We extend our gratitude to the following groups and individuals who made this program possible for 2022:

Recurring Donors
Mike Sobaski
Angela Sobaski
Sarah Randall
Syed Kaiser

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Paper Airplanes partners with like-minded NGOs, language and skills providers, and academic institutions to maximize our student and volunteer success.

If your organization shares this mission and you would like to work together, please contact: partnerships@paper-airplanes.org

Interested in studying or volunteering with Women in Tech?

Visit our homepage at paper-airplanes.org and register your interest in participating in the Fall 2022 semester.