

English Lessons 2006

Dear Bi Asha and Catriona,

The ZAPHA+ members would like to thank you very much for the English classes that they have been receiving. I usually stop in to the class once or twice a week just to see what it is they're learning, and then when I see the students at our regular Saturday meeting we converse in English. And they're kind enough to then try to converse with me in Swahili – so we help each other in that way.

Last week I took photos of the class and interviewed the students to find out why they wanted to learn English and to find out if they wanted the lessons to continue. I visited the class this past Friday and found out that the funding had not been extended so that the classes are no longer in session. Whether or not you extend the funding I'd like to say that the classes have been a huge success and very beneficial to the students.



Kaesser Mohammed is the English teacher and he is wonderful. He expects the students to arrive on time and to stay in the class for the duration of that class. If someone needs to leave the class for any reason they must first get permission from him. The students like him very much and his teaching style is very good – he does a good job of including all of the students in the lesson including the women who can often be quiet and hesitant.



I have noticed that there are at least 14 students who attend every class – that is four days a week. I'm not sure exactly when the classes began but I think it was in October. There are at least four of the students who always try to talk with me in English when I see them outside of class. I am amazed at how quickly they have picked it up because I am still struggling with my Swahili even after many months of lessons.



The students have many different reasons for wanting to learn English – these are some of the reasons that they gave:

Having knowledge of English gives them an opportunity to go on to higher education

Nuru wants to be able to communicate with many people around the world

Salum said that according to the situation of the world – if you can't speak English you can't get a good job

They want to be able to speak with the visitors who come to ZAPHA+

They want to become their own advocates – Amour said that because of their difficulty of language their rights are denied because they can't explain their needs

The women were interested in learning English so that they could help their children with their homework and solve problems together – they were all especially excited to be able to speak with their children in English and study together

Asha (on the left) comes every day and she said that she likes reading in English. She has a child in form 3 and one in secondary school and she said that her children help her more than she helps them in their English studies. She couldn't read or write at all in the beginning and Kaesser said that she had the highest grade for the last test.

Khamis (in the center) could already speak some English but has improved immensely. He wants to learn English for a number of reasons:

If he learns English he can communicate with more people

English will help him if he goes to Mecca on pilgrimage

ZAPHA+ gets aid from different donors and it's important to be able to speak with them and explain their needs themselves

Wants to be able to teach his children English

To be able to speak to people who come from the mainland

Everything is in English like the instructions for medicine

The members have very good reasons to learn English. I think that more than anything the members want to become self-sufficient and to be able to speak for themselves. I can tell you that the students that I know certainly have much more self confidence today than they did before the lessons began. The last photo shows that all of the students would like to continue the classes if that is possible. They were all very appreciative that they have been given this opportunity to learn English.