SUPPORTING ESL STUDENTS DURING WARTIME WITH "PAPER AIRPLANES"

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IMPACT OF MILITARY CONFLICTS

- education and the mental health of students

- interrupted schooling

- restricted access to educational resources

- higher dropout rates

- 117,2 million displaced people

(PA, 2023).

IMPACT OF MILITARY CONFLICTS

- technical issues, air alerts, communication problems (Ukrainian students)

- a lack of motivation and low engagement in the learning process (Westerlund, 2023, p 24).

- undermining students' social and emotional development hindering the psychological safety (Cahill, 2010).

IMPACT OF MILITARY CONFLICTS. SOLUTIONS?

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- boost students' involvement in the learning process

- offer flexible scheduling and varied study methods

- focus on psychological well-being

- have access to open educational resources and free online platforms (Lavrysh et al., 2022).

IMPACT OF MILITARY CONFLICTS. SOLUTIONS?

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- Education is a fundamental human right and plays an essential role in equipping individuals with survival skills, conflict resolution strategies, and resilience necessary to thrive even during wartime (Cahill, 2010).

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

- offer a sense of normalcy and structure

- create spaces for cultural exchange and building trusting relationships

- promote effective communication, self-expression, and community engagement

- enhance students' educational and employment prospects (Guardia et al., 2022).

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS VOLUNTEERING Q&A

1. How can volunteering be included in your lessons to help students learn about community and responsibility?

2. How might volunteering experiences change the way teachers teach or interact with students?

3. What important ethical issues should teachers consider when setting up or taking part in volunteer projects?

4. How can teachers evaluate how volunteering affects their teaching and their students' learning?

5. What problems might teachers face when volunteering outside of school, and how can they handle them?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

PAPER AIRPLANES (PA)

In 2013, Bailey Ulbricht spent two months volunteering in Reyhanlı, Turkey, a small town on the Turkey–Syria border. She met young Syrian college students desperate to complete their university degrees despite the conflict in Syria. She began Skyping a few of them to help them practice English.

Bailey realized she could ask people in her network to volunteer to tutor. 10 tutors from Carleton College joined her in the first Paper Airplanes English language program in June 2014.

PAPER AIRPLANES (PA)

Paper Airplanes (PA) is a non-governmental organization that "provides free, one-on-one virtual language and skills instruction to people affected by conflict".

Paper Airplanes aims to address gaps in language, higher education, and professional skills training (PA, 2025).
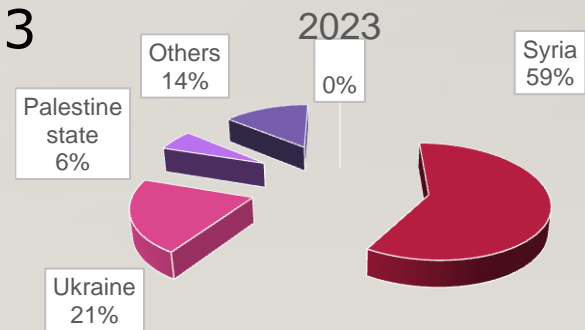
English Program

Women in Tech
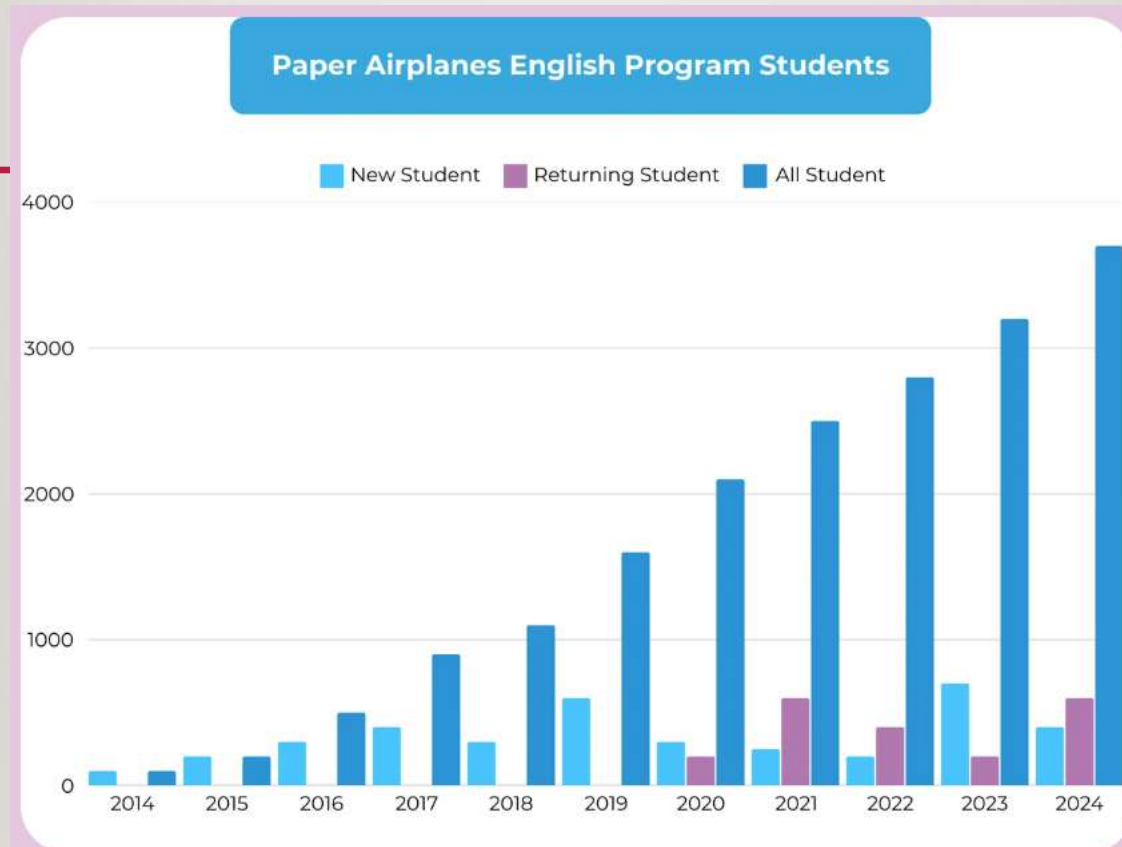
Professional Skills Development

PA ENGLISH PROGRAM

- 70% of PA students return as tutors and continue volunteering

- PA empowers female students (about half of the students are females) (2023 Annual Report, 2023, p.8)

- PA reached Syria, Ukraine, Palestine, and Afghanistan, through its English program in 2023
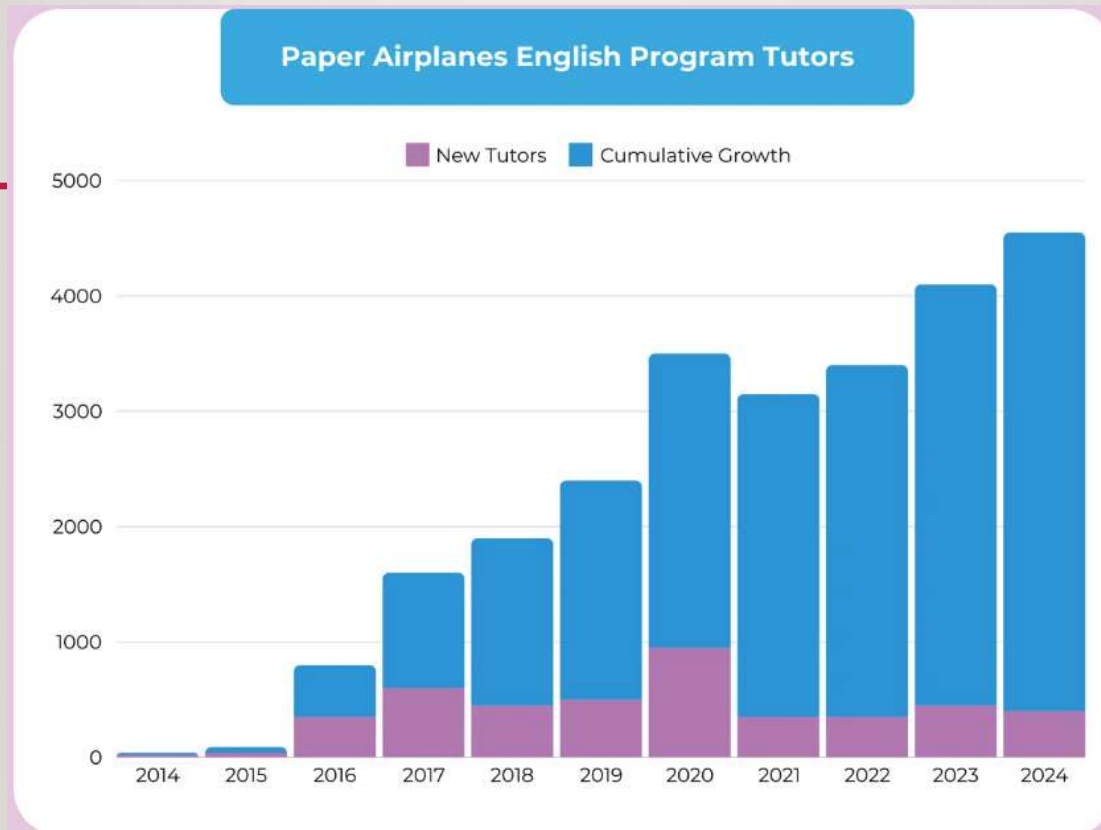
2023

Others 14%

0%

Syria 59%

Palestine state 6%

Ukraine 21%

PA ENGLISH PROGRAM

approximately **400** new students each year
3,589 students by the end of 2024 (https://www.paper-airplanes.org/)

PA ENGLISH PROGRAM

In the 1:1 program, each student is matched with a tutor. In addition, 3-5 students are matched with a tutor in the Speaking Classes program. **4,593** tutors involved since 2014 (https://www.paper-airplanes.org/).

PA ENGLISH PROGRAM

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- PA English Program Staff

- Managing Director

- English Program Manager

- English Program Coordinator

- English Admissions and Enrollment Coordinator

- Program Facilitators

PA ENGLISH PROGRAM

- TUTOR RESPONSIBILITIES & EXPECTATIONS

- confidentiality

- curriculum usage

- STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES & EXPECTATIONS

- Assessment in PA: diagnostic, formative and summative

- Student portfolios

- Levels: B1S1, B1S2, B2 S1, B2S2

- Speaking Class

PA ENGLISH PROGRAM

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- Best PA Pre-Semester Practices (guess which is false)

  - Take the Duolingo exam to understand what your student is going to take
  - Conduct an intro meeting with student before the first lesson
  - Connect with your student's respective 1 on 1 or SpC tutors to discuss your student's strengths/weaknesses
  - Contact student's parents in case he / she misses a lesson or doesn't complete self-study assignments
  - Set goals at the beginning of the semester during the first lesson (track throughout the semester, maybe have goals pulled up next to Tutor Textbook during prep or even lesson, check-ins)

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- Best PA Lesson Practices (guess which is false)

- Always, always prepare for the lessons!!

- Take notes throughout the lesson how common mistakes. If mistakes are consistently made, offer verbal feedback throughout the lesson. At the end of the lesson, recap some of the more common mistakes and provide written feedback at the end of each lesson.

- Use exit tickets as chance to prepare for Duolingo exam, review unit vocab/grammar, work on extra skills for professional and academic development, and/or even as a catch up.

- Always review the midterm or final exam (even if your student passes!) so you know how your student can continually improve.

- Always ask your students to turn their cameras on when you have a lesson online.

PA ENGLISH PROGRAM

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- To conclude:

- English language programs not only enhance language skills but create supportive communities;

- they integrate inclusive, culturally sensitive approaches, alongside technology and support services to address the needs of their students;

- educators, policymakers, and international organizations must recognize the critical importance of these programs and actively support and expand them.

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THANK YOU!

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