

MIGRANT ACTION TRUST

159 Stoddard Road  
Mt Roskill, Auckland  
PO Box 8315 Auckland  
Tel (09) 629 3500 Fax (09) 629 3504  
www.migrantactiontrust.org.nz

# NEWSLETTER

MIGRANT ACTION TRUST (MAT)

OCTOBER 2008

ISSUE 6

## Owning a business - a better future In the eyes of a Somali refugee

### Inside this issue:

*A woman empowered* 2

*In search of belongingness* 2

*Jobsearch Support @ Libraries* 3

*Changes in MAT Board* 3

*MAT Fact File* 4

*Outward Bound experience of a Filipino youth* 4

Guuled Warfa, a Somali refugee, came to New Zealand from a Malaysian quota in 2003. For Guuled, owning a business is a better future. True to his word, he purchased a business 17 months ago and named it G W Computer Sales and Service. His shop is situated at 212 Stoddard Rd, Mt Roskill, Auckland.

G W Computer Sales and Service sells computer and accessories and offers reliable repair. The business also provides keys cut, copy and print, photo development and other services. On weekends, Guuled sells computer parts in flea markets. A hardworking and sincere Somali man, Migrant Action Trust (MAT) was only happy to assist when he first approached the organization early last year.

Previous to being in business, Guuled was employed at Hart Group Limited now Datacable Limited in Albany.

Going back to Somali in 2006 to get married, he came back to New Zealand with renewed vitality and motivation to get ahead in life. He's confident that a better future lies ahead of him if he gets into business.

As any new businessman, he found it extremely challenging getting started. With limited planning on top of low start-up capital, it was a huge struggle keeping up with the outgoings. He also found it difficult to run the business on his own but he was prepared to take the challenge.

He filed his first company return for year ending March 2008 with accounting assistance from MAT and MAT Volunteer Ebenezer Ilori, a migrant accountant from Nigeria.

*"I had very difficult time but with the advice of Agnes Granada and through hard work, I'm in much better position now,"* he said.

His goal is to be known as a very reliable and cost effective shop in Central Auckland area.

His advise to fellow migrant and refugees:

*"It's very good to have your own business but to startup your own business, you are going into uncertainty in most of the cases, because you don't know what to expect. However, if you work hard, provide a reliable service and be honest to your customer you will succeed."*

**G W Computer Sales & Service**  
212 Stoddard Road, Mt Roskill,  
Auckland  
Tel # 629 3367 Mob 021 717 498

*Ebenezer (left) confirming with Guuled stock figures of the business for his company tax returns*





## A woman empowered

After months of meeting and planning with MAT, Odetta Ntezicimpa, a refugee from Burundi and a solo mother of 5, has finally started her Mobile Driving School.

Her start-up capital was a loan

from MAT, partly funded by JR McKenzie Trust. She also contributed her little savings to demonstrate her commitment to get into business.

The fresh inspiration to get ahead came from her participa-

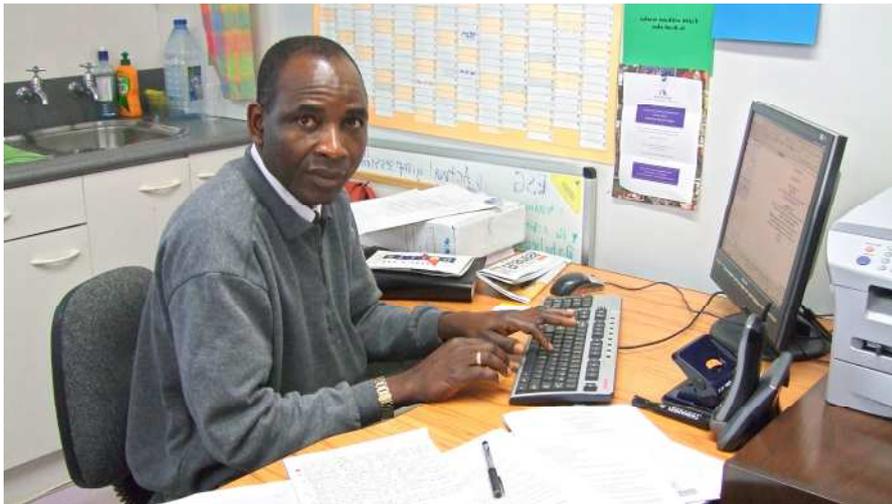
tion from REACT programme of ARMS facilitated by MAT's Facilitators, Olga Bernstein and Karen Venter.

The business is to teach driving to migrants and refugees specifically women who are not comfortable with male driving instructor. Because she speaks 7 languages including English and French, she will also offer teaching the road code to those whose English is not their first language. By year 3, she envisions she would have reached 90% of the women refugees in Auckland and have taught them to drive – a necessary skill in New Zealand.

Odetta came to NZ in 1999 after staying in a refugee camp in Kenya for 3 years. Indeed, she has come a long way overcoming the challenges and struggles of a refugee and a single mother at that.

Those interested to enroll in her **Mobile Driving School can contact her at 021 266 9465 email instructor@mds.co.nz**

## In search of belongingness



“And I found it in Migrant Action Trust,” said Ebenezer Ilori, a migrant accountant from Nigeria.

He was working with Gilmours as a general hand person. But he decided to pursue his accounting career in New Zealand as he does

not want to waste his 19 years extensive accounting experience.

He used to work with Nigeria Ogun-Oshun River Basin Development Authority, where he monitored government funded multi-billion projects such as dams, roads and bore holes in rural and urban

areas.

Ebenezer was one of the participants of Employment Support Group and Migrant Accountants Training/Workshop. He did not stop there but also made use of MAT's Mentoring, CV Clinic, Advocacy and Voluntary Work Experience programme.

His hard work and perseverance paid off when he was promoted as Storeman. He said it is a good sign that he is getting up the ladder and would soon realize his goal of landing a job in finance.

To this day, Ebenezer still visits MAT to share his time with the organization despite his heavy work mostly on day and night shift. He also finds time to volunteer as Accounts Clerk at Fresh Fire Pentecostal Church.

In his own words:

**“Thanks to Migrant Action Trust who is wonderful, excellent and helpful to the migrants and refugees.”**

## Changes in MAT Board

Farewell to MAT's former Chairperson Heval Hylan who moved back to his home country in August 2008. Also, farewell was said to Jane Yee, who joined the Board last year. Her family decided to relocate to Christchurch.

MAT appreciates Heval and Jane for their significant contributions to the vision of the organization.

In September 2008, we welcomed Asoka Basnayake, Camille Nakhid and Remi Cruz to MAT Trust Board. Asoka and Camille are not new faces in the migrant community sector as they are known to have genuine interest and are both pro-active in migrant issues.



(1st row L-R) Asoka Basnayake, Tanya Suin, Navin Kumar Sharma

(2nd row L-R) Richard Barter, Camille Nakhid, Remi Cruz

Remi, on the other hand, a civil engineer who runs his own consultancy firm, likewise, is not new to the migrant community having

been a MAT Volunteer Mentor.

MAT is honoured and privileged to have Asoka, Camille and Remi in the Trust Board.

## Jobsearch Support @ Libraries

MAT endeavors to be relevant to the needs of migrants and refugees. This new service of MAT which started in Feb 2008 is "bringing the service" to where migrants and refugees are located.

For a new migrant jobseeker, some of the obstacles include mobility and transport, unfamiliarity of the area and getting the right information at the right time.

Often times, job searching alone could be quite depressing, particularly when the result has been unsuccessful.

Migrant and refugee job seekers who come to the Jobsearch sup-

port @ Libraries receives a one-on-one support on creating a "targeted" Kiwi-style CV and cover letter.

They also get to know other job-seekers where they could share or exchange ideas and experiences.

So far a total of 77 migrants have been assisted. Currently, this is held **every Wednesday 10 to 12 am at Onehunga Library (Auckland City) and 1:30 to 3:30 pm at Glenfield Library (North Shore City).**

The service will also start at **Avondale Library (Auckland City) every Friday 1 to 3 pm beginning 17 Oct.**

One of the best things that ever happened in this service is placing two migrants into employment.

Behrouz, an Iranian, having been unemployed for more than a year, found a part time work at Refugee Services as a Driver.

He still continues to attend the group in Onehunga Library just to remind MAT that he is still looking for extra work to fill his currently part-time position.

Rachel, a Fijian, on the other hand, found work as a caregiver within two weeks after she revised her CV.



Rachel (second from left) during her one-on-one CV writing session with Agnes

Behrouz (second from right) and Greg attending one of the Jobsearch session at Onehunga library



## MAT Fact File

Over 800 migrants have been assisted from July 2006 to September 2008.

Sixty-three migrants were placed to employment between July 2007 to June 2008 plus 21 between July to Sep 2008 – this equates to an annual contribution to the total economy of \$2.1 million at an average of \$25K salary per annum. The numbers exclude those who found employment but did not report back to Migrant Action Trust.

Not bad for a miniscule organization. But we could not have done it without the support of **Tear Fund, Ministry of Social Development, ASB Community Trust, YouthTown, Auckland City Council, COGS, Lottery Welfare, United Way, JR McKenzie Trust and our over 40 volunteers**



(from left) Mel Libre and IRD's Abdul Rafik (Volunteer Speakers) at Migrant Accountants Workshop (one out of nineteen services provided to migrants and refugees)

whose names you will find in our website

## Outward Bound Experience of a Filipino Youth A Race Relation Initiative

by Darrow Jones Benito

Outward Bound began in February 2008 at Anakiwa in the South Island with no single clue or understanding of what I was about to face. All that came to my mind was opportunity, challenge, determination and enjoyment. 21 days without contact from my family or friends to support me was a difficult mission.

During my first day, there must have been over a hundred students expected to arrive from all ages and other cultures taking part. With such enthusiastic atmosphere at the school of Outward Bound, I met my team, my new friends and learned about the school, which all seemed like an entire year knowing everything and everyone. Two days of introduction was enough to prepare each and everyone's idea of setting out on a great adventure.

The course consisted of about 70% constant adventure and 30% school activity. I liked the simplicity of preparing the best food for breakfast lunch and dinner while adventures introduced a hundred new meaning to a terrorized appetite. Nevertheless satisfying beauty had played greatly in all of the adventure.

The 2-day expedition was the first outdoor activity. Seeing how large the area my team had to trek, I started thinking of quitting.

But my team needed encouragement and determination to accom-

plish such adventure. I pushed my will at times of surrender and in the end, our team stood strong and accomplished our goal.

It was obvious to everyone that team work became more common and stronger. Leadership began to take part during our 3-days sailing challenge since a captain is needed to accomplish the task which settled my team's compliance and eventually enjoyed more of sailing and ignored the pain of challenges.

Emotions then began to hit my team during sailing due to a whole week of no contact from any family or friend but was immediately relieved when letters arrived after the sailing which had eased most of the team's heart throbbing pain.

Second week activities were mainly focused in the school, which began by helping out in the community of Anakiwa. My team's tasks were gardening and cutting thistle weeds on a large mass of land. Community service proved most of my ability to serve and patience to endure when heat scorched throughout the land.

Three day soloing followed the community service which embarked at night and dispatching us on an island one by one and one hundred meters apart as our only supplies consisted of a mat, cover, sleeping bag, limited food, limited clothes and a bucket.

Surviving alone for three days was a complete isolation where moments involved me talking to myself and suffering from boredom. The challenge of isolation made me realize and reflect mainly about myself before I came to Outward Bound and the changes I had achieved for myself throughout the course. With three days solo ending the second week, the two-days kayaking which I figured for me was the most thrilling adventure due to the adrenaline rush of water rapids.

Last adventure ended as the biggest expedition which lasted three days, though compared to the first expedition three days expedition was more enduring, heart aching and mind breaking with a size three times bigger than what we had covered at first. Eventually my team had conquered the challenge due to the experience we had achieved throughout the last adventures. The course ended with a 22 km marathon placing me at the two hour mark.

Our last day was graduation at Outward Bound and the certificate that I received proved to be the greatest achievement that I have endured because the impossible task challenged the modes of difficulty, fear and weakness. The course transformed my personality to be cooperative and focus on a healthier life style.

I would like to thank the Migrant Action Trust for endorsing my Southern Cross sponsored scholarship to undertake a great experience of a lifetime. 🌸