

## **'How-to' guide – informal English conversation help**

In a multi-cultural city, and in many or even most streets within it, there are people who have come to live here, but struggle with the language. Often, what they most need is the opportunity to practice their English with someone else.

In the same street, there are likely to be people with excellent English, who have time on their hands – and who might really welcome the opportunity to help someone else (or perhaps even a small group), chatting over a cuppa – and making friends in the process.

A win-win situation!

But how to make it happen?

The first stage is simply smiling and greeting – the first stage to pretty much anything good in community-building!

If you meet someone locally who has limited English, do stop for a chat, ask them where they come from and whether they have the opportunities they want to practice their English. You might then say: "I've been thinking about gathering a small group to practice their English once a week. Might it help you to be part of that?"

Then it's just a question of making some simple arrangements and see how it goes.

This may seem like a small contribution. But it tells the person that they are welcome here, that other people care, it offers them the beginnings of a friendship group – and it will hugely help them to learn the language which will be their passport to contacts, friendships and interactions of all kinds in the community which is now their home.

That contribution is valuable indeed! And in a win-win situation, we feel sure that you will get back at least as much as you put in. It just takes a bit of courage to make a start.