



MEP NEWSLETTER: ISSUE 13- MAY 2026

Welcome to the MEP newsletter – a place for everyone to share news and information.
Special thanks to Joey and Siham who have joined the newsletter team.

Dates for your Diary

Term dates: We will be **closed** for the bank holiday on **Monday 25th May**.

The last week of term: **Monday 22nd July**.

Tuesday 26th May: Social event at the Community Garden

Monday 10th August: Visit to a nature reserve - room for up to 15 students

Look out for more summer events in August - more information to follow.

An Update on the English Teaching

We've had another busy term, and MEP has been full with students learning English every Monday. People who come to us are in the early stages of English, but they may have more than one other language. Every table in our community hall has a small group of learners with a volunteer teacher. They study, chat, and laugh. Teachers learn from students as well.

We are a community, and newcomers quickly make friends. At lunchtime we share a meal, share experiences and people help each other. When they are confident and ready, our students are able to move on to formal college classes to continue learning English. **Anne**



**Thank
You**

Thank You to our Supporters

At MEP we rely on donations to pay for rent, lunch, tea and coffee and travel costs.

In December, following a successful pitch for the BrightonSoup fundraising, we were shortlisted to present our funding proposal at the later **BrightonSoup** event. Whilst we didn't win the full award, we were awarded some money from the funding supporting the event. More recently we have been very fortunate to receive funding from **Enjoolata**, the **Brighton and Hove Fairness Fund** and the **Chalk Cliff Trust**. We are deeply grateful to these organisations for their support.

Thanks to everyone who contributes to MEP, and also to our hardworking fundraising team, especially new member Katie.

.....

A Film about MEP

You may have noticed Rosie filming in April during our MEP sessions. We are making a short film about MEP, to tell people what we do. Rosie will be filming different activities, including English lessons, the Sewing Group and the cooking team. She will also go to the MEP garden to do some filming there. She has filmed some English lessons in progress, and interviewed some students and volunteers.

The purpose of the film is to show our different activities, and to find out what MEP means to our students. It will be used to demonstrate the range of things which we do, and how important MEP is. Most of all, we can use it to help fundraising, by showing it to potential supporters.



Interview with Siham

Joey interviewed our volunteer Siham, who first came to MEP with her family when she was a young child.

Joey: Please tell us about yourself.

Siham: We arrived in the UK in 2006. My parents did not speak any English, so we were introduced to MEP, which at that time took place at the Cowley Club. They helped them with learning English and being able to communicate. Throughout that time, Paolo was the best mentor we could ever have. We also had help from the Resource Centre, who have helped all of us that arrived from Kenya to support our Oromo community in Brighton. MEP has been such an inspiring place, because everyone's trying to help each other, and I felt that was exactly what we needed, because when we arrived we didn't know anybody.

Joey: You mentioned that you came from Kenya, and your parents didn't speak English. What was their first language?

Siham: Their first language is Amharic. They migrated from Ethiopia during the time of conflict, because it was very dangerous for them to stay there, so they both migrated to Kenya. I was born there, and when I was a baby we were given the chance to live in Brighton.

Joey: Do your parents speak English now?

Siham: Yes, they both speak really good English. They've done an amazing job, having to learn something new and navigate an unfamiliar country. Around 2008 my dad started a youth football team called Salaam FC. He wanted to help children to get scouted and take part in football tournaments, as clubs were so expensive at the time, and that was a barrier for many children. We played a football tournament in Paris in 2016. There was just me and one other girl in the whole football team. It was amazing. Even now we do football tournaments, and he still has his youth community group.

Joey: Wow, that sounds inspirational. What are you studying now? And why did you choose to come back and volunteer with MEP?

Siham: I study criminology and forensic psychology at university. I'd like to pursue this as a career. I'm about to finish my degree, and I want to do my master's in terrorism and counter-terrorism with security. The reason why I want to do this is because there are so many ways we can help people. And I chose MEP because I was supposed to fulfil 40 hours volunteering. Of course, I've done more than that, because I love MEP so much, and I don't think I would want to leave.

Joey: I believe you also have a perfume-making business? Tell us about that.

Siham: Yes, I'm making perfumes. It's called "Sukar", which means "sugar". I went to Dubai, approached vendors, and told them what base notes and layer notes I wanted. It's been amazing. It's my secret joy. Hopefully, my first delivery's going to be arriving in two weeks time. I'm really excited for it to arrive, and I'll bring some in to MEP.





Spring Update on the MEP Garden

Spring is here and the Garden Teachers are busy gardening! Everything is growing so fast now. We would love to have your help at the MEP Community Garden in the next months. If you would like to come to the garden, just to be in a green place, you are welcome to visit us when we have an open day for a social visit.



The Brighton weather has been cold for too long. Now it is sunny but also dry, the daylight is good and so the next few weeks are the best time for sowing seeds and transplanting small plants into the ground.

Will and Rosie, the Garden Teachers, have been heroes (once again) and used the new wood we purchased last year from the successful donations to build the garden slopes. The new terraces will be so much better for growing. This big task is nearly done but there is more to do and we would like more help to finish this job, if anyone can support Will. Don't worry, if you can't do this kind of heavy gardening,

we still need you! We would love it if you can help with watering, sowing seeds and transplanting small plants into the ground and weeding under supervision.

We meet on Thursdays from 9.30am to 12.30pm, and on Fridays from 1pm to 4pm. Sometimes we go on Tuesday afternoons or Saturday/ Sunday mornings. Please chat with your MEP teacher if you are interested in improving your English in a garden! Rosie and Laurie (another new teacher) are both volunteering as garden teachers and Monday class teachers. Please talk to them at the MEP Monday classes about the garden, if you want to know more.

If you haven't been to the garden before then it would be good to come on **Tuesday 26th May at 2pm to 4.30pm for the first SOCIAL**. We will go ahead if the weather is good enough. We will give more information about this nearer the time.

The ground to the garden is sloping with uneven grass, so you need to wear old trainers and clothes. It isn't suitable for buggies and tiny toddlers, and you have to be with your child the whole time.

Take Bus 46 to Osborne Road and let one of us know you are thinking of coming. We can reimburse bus fares. **We welcome you and hope to see you there!**



SAUNA SESSION

In February, Paul S organised a trip with some of our students to Saunadelic at Hove Lagoon. Here he explains how it went....

I use Saunadelic regularly for my health conditions, and they kindly offered a free traditional sauna session for MEP students. The trip was a great success: Amin, Abdu, Zabi and I got the full Saunadelic experience from Fay, the Sauna Master.

During the sauna we each got a gentle thrashing on the painful areas of our bodies with special wooden "whisks"; the relief was palpable and the smiles and laughter undeniable. Fay asked regularly "Are you ok?", and in response Amin, who, like all of us, was feeling immense relief, said he was "VERY OK!" We all laughed and that became the phrase of the hour!

When I go I alternate between the sauna and the ice-water plunge for maximum health benefits. It was winter, and the ice-water plunge was optional, but to my surprise Amin, Abdu and Zabi chose to use it! They all absolutely loved it and were feeling energised and refreshed with their individual pains relieved. I felt very proud of them and honoured to share the experience with them. We ended our session in the lovely heat of the sauna as it rained outside, watching the waves from the wind on the lagoon with some cinnamon tea and a slice of fresh orange.

All in all it was a proper healing experience for us all. We all left with a spring in our step. I personally slept very well and I am sure Amin, Abdu and Zabi did too. I can't thank Fay and Faye (Saunadelic Manager) enough for being so welcoming, empathetic and engaging with each of us. I love it there and I am so happy to have introduced the Saunadelic experience to my MEP Brothers!



Sewing Group News

Once again we had a very busy term in the Sewing Group. Our students have learnt new techniques and have made some wonderful clothes.

This term we were lucky to receive some generous donations: thanks to **Tessi** for the overlocker and **Corinne** for the sewing machine. We are full in the Sewing Group, but please ask if you would like to join the waiting list.



.....
*We hope you have enjoyed reading this newsletter. If you have ideas for future editions, or would like to write something, please contact Susan, Joey or Siham.
 All people whose photos appear in this newsletter have given permission for them to be used.*