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SUCCESS STORIES

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 **Speech**
NEW ZEALAND
NEW ZEALAND SPEECH BOARD
Helping our Nation to communicate

Learning the practical skills needed for public speaking

Paul gained the Certificate in Professional Speaking with Distinction in 2023. He kindly shared his extraordinary personal story, his experience of the Professional Speaking for Migrants programme, how it helped improve his speaking and presentation skills and his advice for others.

Can you tell us a bit about your background?

In 2004 I was involved in human rights activities while pursuing my degree in Political science in the Democratic Republic of Congo. When the war broke out in South Kivu, my colleagues from Tutsi Ethnicities were arrested and tortured and accused of working with Rwandan Government. After they were arrested, I stood up and advocated for them as a human rights activist. After I alerted the whole world to what was happening the Government Military came and arrested me.

I was detained in jail, tortured and beaten. I was on the brink of dying, and one of my colleagues passed away in jail during the process. I fell sick and was taken to hospital, escorted by Military. I fled from the hospital to Uganda with the clothes on my back and US \$10 in my pocket. A friend helped me escape the hospital and gave me the money.”

I crossed one of the African Great Lakes, Kivu, on a boat, walked, and hitched rides on the backs of trucks for days before crossing the border illegally. I had no ID, no visa, no passport, nothing.

I landed in Kampala where I spent nine years as a refugee before coming to New Zealand with my daughter in 2014, joining my wife who had arrived in Hamilton a few years earlier on the Refugee Quota programme.

I had NGO experience in Uganda but had trouble finding work in New Zealand. I eventually found employment and now work as a Settlement Navigator, helping newly arrived refugee families settle in New Zealand.

What was your overall experience of the course?

The course was well tailored to improving speaking skills. It definitely boosted my confidence and lifted my speaking and English skills to the next level.

What are some of the ways the course has benefited you?

It gave me all the tools I wanted to be a good professional public speaker. It has built up my confidence. I learned lots of useful strategies to catch the audience’s attention and it helped me to make more structured PowerPoint presentations.

I am so excited and grateful to have had this opportunity to get such professional mentoring.

What is the most important aspect of the course, in your opinion?

How to structure a PowerPoint and learning the strategies to attract the audience’s attention. The group discussions were informative and helpful and the individual catch ups with the tutor outside of class time were invaluable.

What advice would you have to other migrants and refugees thinking about this course?

Go for it! You won’t have any regrets participating in this course.

“It gave me all the tools I wanted to be a good professional public speaker. It has built up my confidence.”



Congratulations and good luck Paul – we could not be more thrilled with your success!

Paul has been featured in numerous media outlets! To read more about Paul, follow the links below.

[NZ Herald](#)
[Stuff.co.nz](#)
[The Spinoff](#)

Interested in participating in or running your own Professional Speaking for Migrants course? Get in touch with us:
info@spechnz.co.nz

