



DM&E Tips for Refugee Youth Career Development Programs

Importance of Career Development Programs

Career development is an opportunity for refugee youth to discover their strengths and interests and apply them towards future education and employment goals. Participation in career development programs helps youth to think about career paths and to formulate plans to move forward. It also has a positive impact on high school retention rates.

Key Outcomes of Career Development Program

Career development programs have numerous positive outcomes:

- Higher employment/post-secondary enrollment of youth participants
- Better understanding of and ability to make decisions about future career options
- Increased understanding of the sequential pattern of the *development* of a career
- Higher high school retention rates
- Better understanding of American work values and priorities
- ♦ Higher self-esteem for youth participants
- ♦ Better connection between refugee youth and local community organizations and businesses



Components of Career Development Programs

Successful career development programs involve 4 components:

- ♦ Skills development and job/school preparation
- ♦ Career planning and counseling
- ♦ Internship placements
- ♦ Mentorship

Skills development and job/school preparation

Workshops for refugee youth should target specific skill sets: (1)

- ♦ Oral and written communication
- ♦ Computer proficiency (Knowledge of Word and Excel required; web publishing preferred)



Components, continued

- ◆ Handling money
- ◆ Workplace English
- ◆ Appropriate dress and demeanor
- ◆ Attendance and punctuality
- ◆ Resume and cover letter preparation
- ◆ College application and essay-writing preparation
- ◆ Interview skills through role-playing and simulations

Career planning and counseling

Through the career planning process, students can learn about the sequence of events that help a person to realize career objectives. The career planning process can be explored through activities like goal-setting exercises and panel discussions with community and business leaders.

Internship placements

On-the-job experience help students transition from school to work environments. Exposure to work settings teaches young people the employability benefits and options that come from a post-secondary degree.

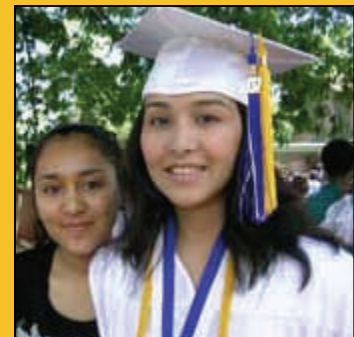
Career development program can facilitate the internship placement process by providing youth with options of different community organizations and local businesses that would like to host an intern. Once youth have identified 2-3 internships of interest, they must formally apply and submit a resume to the organization so that they can practice job-hunting skills. Once accepted for an internship, youth must fulfill their commitment. The duration and frequency of the internship depends on individual program design. (2)

Internships will most likely be unpaid, but the training that comes with on-the-job experience will pay off in the end. However, the program should consider flexible internship scheduling for students who have financial constraints or other (family or work-related) commitments.

Mentorship

Mentoring is an important part of the career development process. (3)

Students placed in work-related internships should be paired with on-site mentors. The mentor develops a working relationship with a student, models appropriate workplace behavior, and coaches the student regarding behaviors, attitudes, and life skills. The mentor also helps the student understand the value of each task and how the student's work contributes to the goals of the organization.





Components, continued

contributes to the goals of the organization.

Students who plan or are interested in attending college should be paired with a current college student or recent college graduate who can help refugee youth to learn what to expect and to develop college survival skills. (4)

Key Partners

Effective usage of key partnerships involves :

- Partnering with **community organizations** and **local business** to secure good internship placements for refugee youth
- Incorporating **local community and business leaders** into the process of teaching career planning
- Working with **local schools** to complement school-based career development programs
- ◆ Helping **parents** to understand the importance of encouraging career development and internship activities
- ◆ Inviting current **college students** or **recent graduates** to be mentors and career planners for refugee youth



Key Indicators

Hard Indicators:

- ◆ Number of youth enrolled in program
- ◆ Duration and frequency of participation
- ◆ Number of youth placed in internships
- ◆ Number of youth completing internships
- ◆ Number of youth who graduate from high school
- ◆ Number of former participants enrolled in post-secondary institutions or in employment positions

Soft Indicators:

- ◆ Participant knowledge of options available after secondary school
- ◆ Participant ability to apply for and secure a job
- ◆ Participant awareness of sequential process to reach career goals
- ◆ Self-esteem of participants
- ◆ Successful completion of internship





Data Collection and Assessment Methods

Basic data collection tools that can be used to monitor and evaluate the success of school engagement include:

- Program, school, and internship attendance sheets
- Focus group and individual interviews with internship mentor
- Focus group and individual interviews with refugee youth
- Mentor questionnaires
- Youth questionnaires
- Internship observations

Additional Resources

Government of Michigan Career-Planning Toolkit
<http://www.michigan.gov/fyit/0,1607,7-240-44291--,00.html>

Youth-at-Work: Career Information website
<http://www.youthatwork.org/education.html>

References for Refugee Youth Career Development Programs

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3. Daugherty-Jenkins, B. (2005) Perspectives of School-to-Career Programs. *Techniques*.
4. Bortolussi, V. (2006) Seamlessly Connecting High School to College to Career. *Techniques*.

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