



DM&E Tips for School Engagement for Refugee Youth

Importance of School Engagement

School engagement bridges the gap between schools and youth programs: Schools will better address the needs of refugee students and youth programs will better complement activities going on inside of the classroom. This ensures that refugee youth receive constant and consistent support.

Outcomes of School Engagement

School engagement has many positive outcomes:

- Youth programs are better linked with school activities
- Improved communication between schools and youth programs
- Schools are more attentive to refugee needs
- Refugee youth feel more integrated into the school environment



Components of School Engagement

Communication

When youth programs keep schools informed about their current activities, initiatives, and services, the schools have a better understanding of the support systems available to refugee youth and can refer students appropriately. Communication should be particularly addressed to teachers of refugee youth in a succinct fashion that is flexible around teachers' busy schedules.

Training modules

Youth program staff can train school administrators and teachers to address the complex needs facing refugee youth. Providing information about the country backgrounds, reasons for displacement, and journeys of refugee youth will foster greater understanding in the school environment. Methods of training include:

- Distributing background materials and guidelines for working with refugee youth
- Hosting workshops on school campuses
- Holding meetings with school staff one-on-one



Components, continued

Information-sharing

In order for youth programs to complement school activities, it is helpful for schools to share information on course syllabi, school education standards, after-school programs, and school events. Again, exchanging information leads to a better continuum of support.

Key Partners

Effective partnerships involve:

- Including **refugee families** in youth program interactions with schools
- Communicating frequently with **teachers** of refugee youth
- Providing trainings to and learning about activities of **local schools**
- Working with **school psychologists** to support students' progress on Individualized Education Plans and to ensure that the psycho-social needs of refugee youth are being addressed

Key Indicators

Hard Indicators:

- Number of schools receiving refugee background materials and guidelines
- Number of trainings held at local schools
- Number of meetings between youth program and school staff members
- Frequency of communication between teachers and program staff
- Frequency of communication between school psychologists and program staff

Soft Indicators:

- School staff members' understanding of challenges and needs for refugee youth
- Youth program understanding of school activities
- Refugee youth's sense of integration into local schools





Data Collection and Assessment Methods

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

- Communication log
- Focus group and individual interviews with school staff
- Focus group and individual interviews with refugee youth
- Staff questionnaires
- Youth questionnaires
- School staff–program staff communication logs

Additional Resources

- Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services (BRYCS)
<http://www.brycs.org>
- CAL Publications: Links to additional resources on program design and instructional approaches for students who are immigrants.
<http://www.cal.org/resources/pubs/CALpubs07.pdf>
- International Rescue Committee: Refugee Youth and Children Backgrounders
<http://www.boiseschools.org/ell/irc.pdf>
- National Center for School Engagement
<http://www.schoolengagement.org>

VISIT our Office:

International Rescue Committee
122 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10168-1289
Phone: (212) 551-3100
Fax: (212) 551-3101
www.theIRC.org

(Bring photo ID to enter the building)

Directions: Take the 4,5,6,7, or S trains to GRAND CENTRAL STATION