



RESETTLEMENT &
INTEGRATION SERVICES



Background

Annually, 80-100 refugee children are entering Calgary as Government Assisted Refugee (CR1)

Challenges

- Language barriers
- Isolation
- Lack of peer relationship
- Unknown school culture
- Pressure of fitting in
- Lack of support from parents
- Racism and Discrimination

Results

- Loss of self-esteem
- Depression
- Involvement in undesirable activities (bullying, gang-related activities)
- School dropout
- Stress
- Burden on the system

Intervention

Researchers and experts dealing with refugee population (U of C, CBE, CCIS and CIC) identified a lack of specific programs that targeted refugee children and youth during their settlement process

Refugee Child Enhanced Integration Project

- The project, in partnership with the Calgary Board of Education and Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, was born in **September 2006** in response to the needs of the Government Assisted Refugee children and youth as a **3 years** pilot project
- Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Initially targeted **40-50** refugee children between the ages of **6-15**
- Provided support in the areas of:
 - Health**
 - Education**
 - Social**
 - Individual Development**

Project's Objective

- Refugee children to stay in school longer and perform better when in school
- Effective resettlement and improved adjustment in the school and community
- Improved coordinated approach to the service delivery of refugee students
- A better understanding of the needs of refugee children and the steps required to be taken in order to better address these needs at a systemic level

Summary of the Outcomes Based on Evaluation

- Successful integration
- Increased awareness on community resources
- Parents became more prepared and involved in their child's education
- Improved academic performance
- Improved behavioral concerns for positive social interaction
- No school dropouts
- Successful graduation in June 2009

Refugee Families With the Project Support

- *Have gained knowledge of the community resources*
- *Have library cards and utilize services*
- *Know the City well and get around*
- *Have access to recreational facilities, attending Zoo, swimming Science Center and skating*
- *Health and well-being has improved*
- *Some families have taken driving tests and passed*
- *Have computers and cellular phones and manage them*

Refugee Families Without the Project Support

- *Struggling with their new life*
- *Making slow progress*
- *Not familiar with the City and not getting around*
- *Not accessing recreational programs*
- *Not realizing benefit of Fee Assistance programs*
- *Lack of participation in the children's schools*
- *Poor contact with teachers/parents*
- *Children at school with no lunch*
- *Dressing not always appropriate*

Reference: "Refugees Student Services Project Final Evaluation" by Edna Sutherland

Project Expansion

- As of **July 1st 2009**, the project was funded to accommodate all Government Assisted Refugee children and youth between the ages of **6-15** coming through **CCIS**
- Recruit refugee children from MCRC (first home)
- Provide **2** years support in the areas of:
 - Health**
 - Education**
 - Social**
 - Individual Development**

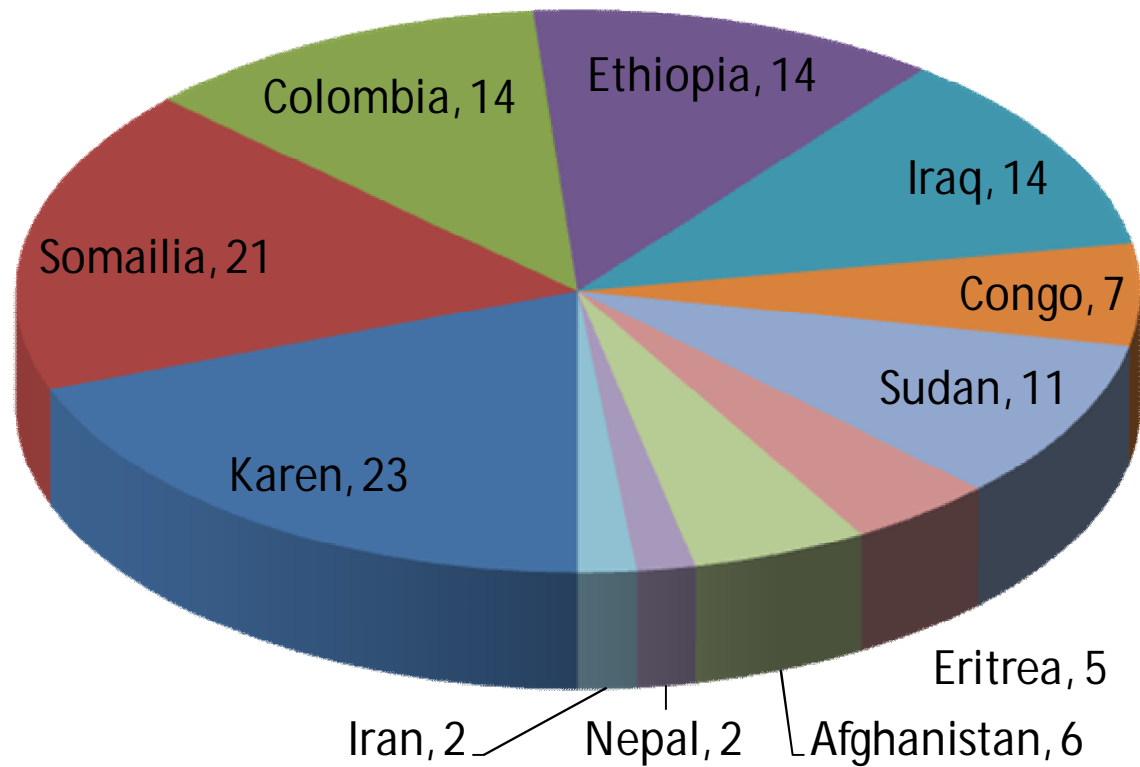


Statistics

- Currently, the project has accommodated **130** refugee children and youth
- Dispersed in **35** schools across the city
- Comprised of **54** families from **12** different countries

1. Burma (Karen)	7.	Sudan
2. Colombia	8.	Afghanistan
3. Ethiopia	9.	Iran
4. Eritrea	10.	Nepal
5. Somalia	11.	Iraq
6. Congo	12.	Philippine

Number of participants by country



Project's Task

Assessment

- Periodically monitor and assess refugee child's condition
- Rich assessment tools (**Home and School Experience Assessment**)
- Identify needs
- Share with parents
- Look for resolutions

Awareness

- Educate parents with the necessary tools and knowledge to better respond to the needs of their child (involvement in school, aware of resources)
- Facilitate workshops on various topics such as, education system in Canada **practical school tour**, anti-bullying, personal hygiene, education and awareness on gang-related topics



Liaison

- Serve as an effective communication bridge between the refugee families, their schools and medical professionals
- A few of the issues that come to the project's attention for resolution are:
 - Lower performance
 - Unacceptable behavior
 - Health related issues
 - Important notes/Fieldtrip forms
 - Improper dressing
 - Poor hygiene
 - Poor lunch choices
 - Parent-Teacher interviews

Connection

- Tour of local public library and obtain access card
- Familiarize families with their local recreational facility
- Referrals to Boys and Girls Club, Big Brother and Big Sister of Calgary and other CCIS' children and youth programs
- Engaging in summer school
- Involvement in affordable summer day camps
- Connect and link refugee children and youth in social and educational activities in the community to enhance their life and living skills (swimming, skating, soccer, art classes, etc.)

Services and Activities

Homework Club/Literacy

- Occurs every Friday at MCRC from 3:30pm – 5:30pm
- Assist with homework and English language, utilizing entertaining approaches such as, games and puzzles
- Celebrate refugee child's accomplishment in school to encourage and motivate other children (**honor roll, superstar student**)
- Sports and fun activities during the summer
- Provide opportunities for children to interact and make friends

Social Events

The project organizes a social gathering for the refugee children and their families every second Saturday of the month

Purpose

- Aims to reduce isolation and promote productivity
- Increase access and awareness in available and affordable recreational activities
- Opportunities for families to share experiences, common challenges and learn from each other
- Build peer relationships
- Familiarize refugee children with indoor/outdoor and winter/summer activities with trips to the Calgary Zoo, Calgary Science Center, leisure centers, Heritage Park, concerts, baseball games, etc.

Buddy Match

- Direct support from one refugee child to another at school
- Volunteer student commits to 20 – 30 minutes over the lunch hour for approximately two weeks

Benefits

- Learn school culture
- Gain peer support
- Feels supported and a sense of belonging

Volunteers

- Given a chance to be a leader
- Feels important and in charge



Challenges

- *Learning English*
- *Making new friends*
- *Completing school assignment*
- *Cold weather*
- *Using computer*
- *Math*
- *Reading*
- *Why my friends are changing*
- *Canadian Food*

Achievements

- *Learning English*
- *Making new friends*
- *Joining sport teams*
- *Having a chance to be an actor*
- *I am so glad for living in Canada because I get everything that I needed like school, friends and everything*
- *Now I can ice skate and roller skate*
- *I learn to ask for help*
- *I learned how to go to school by bus*

Reference: Focus Group – April 2009

We do **BELIEVE** that refugee
children will be as productive as
any of us when given the right
SUPPORT and **SERVICES**



CCIS Youth and Children Services

Regional Outreach Program

Aims to address systemic barriers, issues of accessibility and promote and develop approaches that contribute to culturally competent services by engaging parents for involvement and participation, facilitating cultural understanding and analyzing barriers

Immigrant Youth Outreach Project

Assisting immigrant youth with cultural, linguistic and employment barriers to integrate into Canadian society by accessing information and supporting areas of education, employment and life skills training

Youth Host Program

Facilitating the natural creation of a network of supportive relationships and participate in specifically designed recreational events, giving youths opportunities for acquiring and displaying leadership abilities in a school setting



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CCIS Youth and Children Services cont.

Taking Action on Bullying

Focuses on creating awareness about bullying, its different behaviours and implementing strategies to address this problem by giving parents and schools (children and youth), the skills and knowledge they need to identify the signs of bullying, and to address the challenges associated with it in a non-confrontational manner

4 Season's Recreation

Integrating various newcomer communities and facilitates their access level to recreational opportunities, while providing orientation and familiarization with typical Canadian recreational activities

Adventures in the Sun

Allowing inner city and refugee/immigrant children and youth opportunities to take part in recreational and social activities, learn about other cultures, practice English and develop and grow in a safe and creative environment, while visiting various location in and around Calgary



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CCIS Youth and Children Services cont.

Before and After School

Provides school-age children with the opportunity to participate in various after school activities

Parent Link Centre, New Canadian Children in Calgary and Family Resource Centre

Enhancing positive family interactions, increase support to families, provide knowledge of community resources, assist in child development and strengthen parenting skills

Cross Cultural Children's Centre and New Family Place Child Care

Major emphases is placed on school readiness, language development and inclusion in a diverse environment



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CCIS Youth and Children Services cont.

SOT Youth and Family Project

Host volunteers are matched with a family affected by torture and/or related war trauma to assist with integration via social and emotional supports, language practice, community orientation and overall friendship

ETHOS Youth and Family

Provide culturally sensitive support for immigrant and youth children, youth and their families addressing post-traumatic stress, and other stressors related to migration, resettlement, socio-economic barriers and isolation

About CCIS...

- Dedicated team of 200 experienced staff
- 15 convenient locations
- Collectively speaking over 70 languages
- Served over 10,000 newcomers in 2009

Contact Us!

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**Our Community
Our Future**

I was
**a stranger & you made
me welcome**