

Educating Newly Resettled Refugees about American Collegiate Opportunities

Barry University
Center for Community Service Initiatives
11300 NE 2nd Ave.
Miami Shores, FL 33161

AUTHOR: Anel Ramirez

Abstract

Refugee youth typically experience interrupted education when they are resettled in the United States. They must quickly adapt to a new education system, and many are unfamiliar with higher education in this country. Further, families are often fearful of authority and lack the networks and knowledge needed to navigate the college selection, application, and admission processes successfully. This project organizes Barry students to create a series of educational films that provide information about resources found within American universities, with Barry University as one example. The films will be provided to Church World Service Miami to share with recently arrived refugee families who will be resettled in this area.

Community Impact Outcomes

- ❖ Share knowledge about American higher educational systems with refugee children and parents
- ❖ Support Barry partnerships with Church World Service, Catholic Charities & His House
- ❖ Improve access of university resources, such as scholarships, Federal Work-Study, & tutoring to refugee families by building awareness of their existence
- ❖ Build capacity for Church World Service, Catholic Charities and His House by making available educational resource to their programs

Collaboration with Community Partners



His House Children's Home International Program provides residential care and case management to Unaccompanied Children from Central America and other countries.



Church World Service focuses on finding homes for refugees and providing refugees with resettlement assistance and a welcoming community.

Catholic Charities provides essential services to immigrants and newcomers to this country. They advocate to protect family unity and allow newcomers a new opportunity.



Issue Background

Refugees come into the United States without financial resources for a home, let alone for them to be able to pay for a college education. Even with some support from the government these families still have to find a way to be able to pay for their children's tuition and related fees, including college application fees. "Research suggests that higher education is vital to ensure well-being, greater socioeconomic integration, and successful resettlement of refugee communities to make a positive contribution to society" (Lenette, 2016). However, because these refugees come from a different ethnic background where college is often not an option after primary education, instead work is their priority, making it more difficult to understand how to begin the college application process. Some don't understand what a FAFSA form is, how to complete ACT/SAT waivers, or how to complete applications.

According to research "there is growing evidence that students from such backgrounds generally fare well at a university given the right support" (Lenette, 2016). With the right support, such as how to write a resume and choose a major, their college applications can be made easier.

Once refugees realize that higher education is related to financial stability, they do as much as they can to be able to continue going to college even if that involves working while they're studying. However these students, "were discouraged...as they worked long hours to pay for food and shelter while they attempted to keep up with their school work" (McBrien, 2010).

Project Implementation



MAY 2019 Video to be shared with community partners

APRIL 2019 Service-learning students help edit the film with subtitles

MARCH 2019 Prepare film scripts and service-learning students film around campus

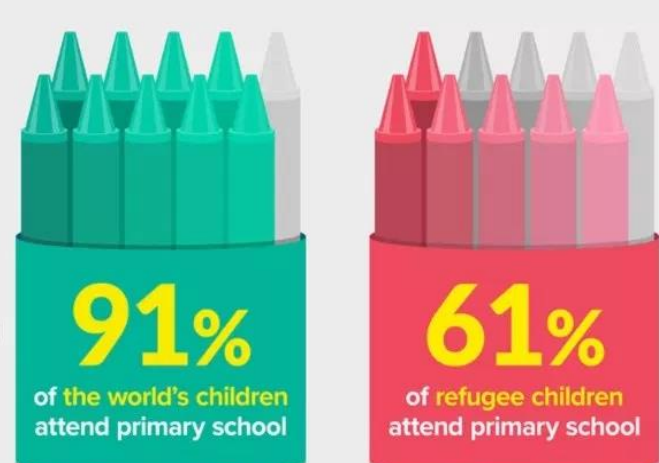
WINTER 2019 Communicate with community partner staff and prepare service-learning students

FALL 2018 Organize Church World Service Welcome Day & facilitate involvement of service-learning students

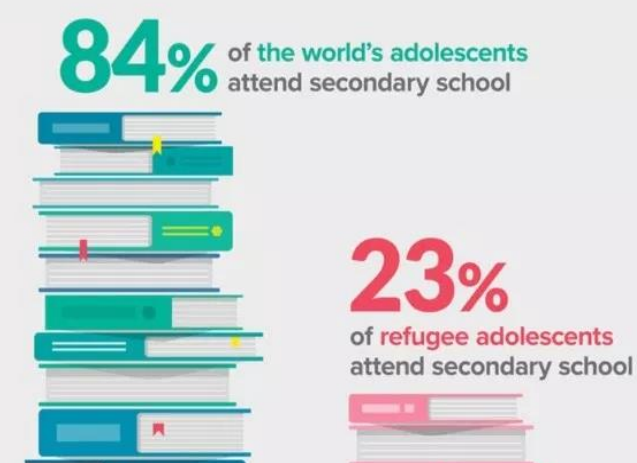
FALL 2017-SPRING 2019 Coordination of Church World Service Welcome Days and ongoing service to recently arrived families put author in contact with families and community organizations



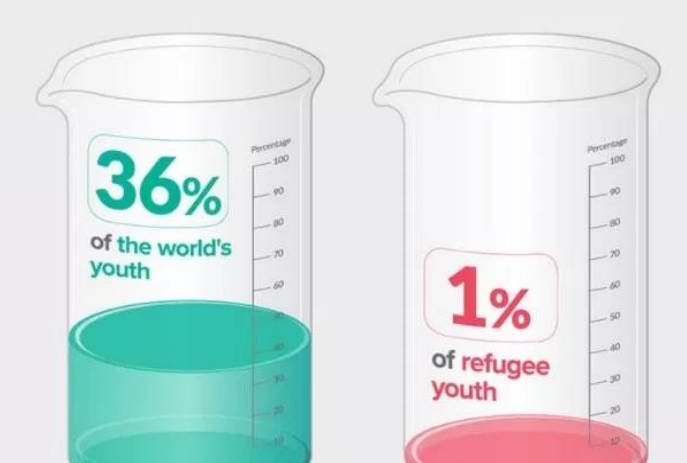
Primary enrolment rates



Secondary enrolment rates



Higher education enrolment rates



Retrieved from <https://www.sixdegreesnews.org/archives/18666/fulfilling-sdg-4-on-education-at-risk-as-3-5-million-refugee-children-deprived-of-schooling>

Assessment and Evaluation

Film saved and archived in a universally accessible format so that the file could be used and opened without a problem by the community partner so that they could use the film

Film saved with subtitles in multiple languages most relevant to Miami refugee populations: Spanish, Creole, Arabic, Urdu, Swahili and others to be completed in April 2019. Subtitles verified by native speakers to make sure translations are correct

Film used by staff at Church World Service, His House, and Catholic Charities and verified through an email confirmation from agency staff

Reflection



After the author became aware of the need for refugee families to be provided with information about college, she was driven to make sure refugees receive the knowledge that they need to be able to apply to colleges. In turn, the goal is to promote awareness about these needs among the Barry student population. Refugees preparing to go to college will be able to have a visual on what resources college campuses have for them and how they can get into college while receiving some financial help. The author will continue working with service-learning students to make this video available to refugees.

References

NBC News. *Miami Dade schools want federal support to educate Cuban refugees.* (January, 2016). Retrieved December, 2018 from <https://www.nbcmiami.com/news/local/Miami-Dade-Schools-Want-Federal-Support-to-Educate-Cuban-Refugees-365209011.html>

McBrien, J. L. *Educational Needs and Barriers for Refugee Students in the United States: A review of the literature.* (Fall, 2010).

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Community Engagement Symposium, March 21, 2019. Barry University.

Barry University