



In Their Own Words...

“When I go out with REACH, I somehow feel happy. We obviously are all the same and this mostly makes me feel as I could do anything with this group.”

- Syrian Participant

“The greatest day of my life was my first day with REACH.”

- Congolese Participant

“I will use my experience with other youth and encourage them to be confident.”

- Iraqi Participant

“Teenage people can learn a lot of things from these activities.”

- Afghan Participant

“Other programs all ask me to talk, write, draw or sing about being a refugee, but here at REACH I can just be me.”

- Syrian Participant

“I go to a lot of places with them (and I meet a lot of new people) and that is a good opportunity for me.”

- Sudanese Participant

REACH's mission is to inspire leadership, academic success, and connections among refugee youth through active dynamic learning outside the traditional classroom.

“This community is now family and our country is their home. Our quest is to help them love and connect to it.”

- Shana Wills, REACH Founder



Experiential Learning Opportunities for Refugee Youth and Their Families

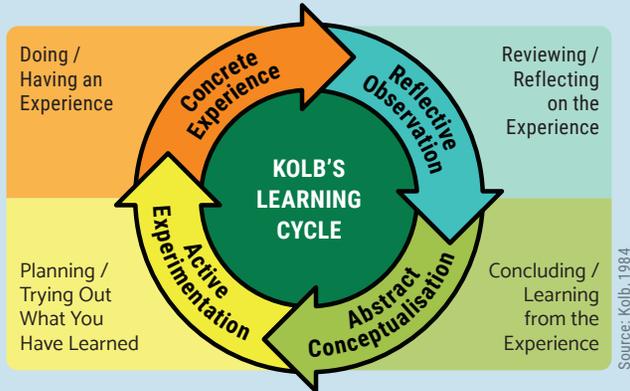


Chicago/Oak Park, IL
773-266-0709
www.reachinichicago.org
reachinichicago@gmail.com
FB: www.facebook.com/reach.org
IG: [refugee_ed_adventure_challenge](https://www.instagram.com/refugee_ed_adventure_challenge)



Our Model

REACH's model engages refugee youth and their families in purposeful outdoor learning endeavors. We work to break down social, economic, and place-based barriers using experiential learning and adventure therapy methods.



REACH participants learn through a process of **doing, reflecting, thinking, and experimenting.**

Evidence

Study after study suggests that the refugee youth who participate in REACH can expect more positive peer relationships, increased school performance, and better mental and physical health outcomes.

- **School Performance:** Experiential learning (hands-on, active, in-context) is an essential ingredient in meaningful and comprehensive student learning and improved academic outcomes.*
- **Mental and Physical Health:** Exposures to outdoor environments and nature-based activities reduce levels of stress, depression and anxiety.*
- **Positive Youth Development:** Adventure-based outdoor play improves social skills, self-confidence, resilience, and creativity.*
- **Civic and Environmental Engagement:** Outdoor experiences build connections to natural and human communities, inspiring stronger civic behaviors and environmental attitudes.*
- **Acculturation:** Combinations of academic support, leadership development, mentoring, and out-of-school experiences ease the acculturation process for refugee youth.*

Citations at right.

Our Work

REACH provides experiential learning opportunities focused on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, & Math) education and adventure sports to refugee youth, ages 11-18, and their families.



Summer and Weekend Adventure Camps

- Day Camps
- Adventure-Based ESL
- Outdoor Education
- Overnight Camping Trips
- Extended Sleep-Away Camps



Youth Leadership Development

- Technical and Leadership Skills Training
- Service Learning Projects
- College & Career Readiness
- Peer Mentoring



Family Support Services

- Nature Play Groups
- Family Trips
- Parent Education

*ASE OSWG, 2011; Barlow, 2015; Bird, 2005; Breunig, 2010, 2013; CDC, 2009; Fagerstam, 2014; Fernee et al., 2017; Garst et al., 2001; James et al., 2017; Larkin, 2011; Louv, 2005; McCurdy et al., 2010; Pasanen et al., 2014; Rickerson et al., 2004; Reynolds & Bacon, 2018; Scott et al., 2013; Skinner et al., 2017; and Thornburn & Marshall, 2014.

Our Impact

REACH has engaged more than **90** youth from **17** countries, who speak a combined total of more than **22** languages, since it launched in 2016.



90% of youth participants Reported Feeling Better About Themselves.



78% of youth participants Reported Feeling Better About Their Futures.



81% of youth participants Reported Feeling Better at Making New Friends.

