At-a-Glance

The Refugee School Impact Grant (RSIG) was designed to provide specialized academic enrichment programs, support and translation and interpretation language services for refugee students and their families. It also sought to raise cultural awareness, understanding and knowledge in relation to the specific needs and resettlement processes of refugee students and their families to district staff, including campus personnel and teachers. The chief goal of the RSIG program is to facilitate refugee students and their families’ transition to the United States (U.S.), the U.S. public school system, more specifically the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD).

Evaluation Methodology

Program documents and interviews with the program manager provided data on RSIG activities. An interview was held with the Director of the RSIG program in August and a follow-up meeting was conducted in September. Several internal documents were reviewed including a list of student participants, staff development training agendas, internal publications and handbooks, and attendance reports. The Dallas ISD student databases provided additional data on students participants. Follow-up information was collected through email and phone.

RSIG Context and Goals

Annually, 70,000 people arrive in the U.S. under the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program; refugees flee their homes, businesses, and communities in order to escape war and persecution or death. Reasons for persecution may include race, religion, nationality, social group or political opinions. It is estimated that approximately 40 percent of refugees are children and young people. These children have often encountered severe hardship and trauma and have frequently experienced interruption in their education. Some may have been without schooling for several years and others may have never experienced a classroom environment.

The RSIG program has been devised to enhance and support core educational services throughout Dallas ISD by providing refugee students and their parents with additional opportunities and activities that will help them become familiar and navigate the U.S. public school system. Additionally, the program encourages overall awareness and sensitivity to the unique circumstances experienced by refugee students that relate to their academic and emotional and social needs to district personnel.

In 2009-2010, the RSIG program received a federal grant of $262,644. The program provided instructional support serving an estimated 810 students who represented many different cultures throughout the school year and during their summer enrichment camp. Likewise, it also provided translation and interpretation instructional support to students in their native languages including the following: Amharic, Kirundi, Tigrigna, Karenni, Somali, Nepali, Burmese, Karen, and Arabic. The RSIG program outlined the following goals:

- Provide educational support services and informational opportunities for refugee students and their families through school orientation meetings on school related topics,
- Support academic achievement for refugee students through tutoring programs that focus on instructional enrichment and remediation,
- Build refugee parent knowledge and comfort level with the U.S. school system and resources available,
- Provide professional development for district personnel and teachers, emphasizing the needs unique to the refugee student population and best practices in all areas of instruction.

Program Participants

A total of 782 refugee students were enrolled in Dallas ISD schools during the 2009-2010 school year, an additional 28 students were served during the summer enrichment camp held during June, 2010. These students were expected to enroll in Dallas ISD schools during the upcoming school year of 2010-2011.

Table 1

| Refugee Student Participant Characteristics 2009-2010 (n=757) |
|-----------------|--------|------|
| N               | %      |
| **Gender**      |        |      |
| Female          | 408    | 52.1 |
| Male            | 374    | 47.8 |
| **Special Populations** |        |      |
| LEP             | 654    | 83.6 |
| Econ. Disadv.   | 687    | 87.9 |
| **Birth Countries** |        |      |
| Iraq            | 56     | 7.2  |
| Tanzania (Africa)| 58   | 7.4  |
| Nepal           | 107    | 13.7 |
| Burma           | 124    | 15.9 |
| Thailand        | 164    | 21.0 |

Notes: Data was taken from Deltademo on 5/24/10.
the school district and resources accessible to them, students and their families to become accustomed to
In an effort to provide opportunities for both refugee
campuses and provided after-school tutoring to an
student's campus. Translators traveled to Dallas ISD
instructional support was available and provided at the
achievement for refugee students; tutoring and
To further its goal of supporting academic
instructional strategies for refugee students, current
introduction of services for refugee students,
displayed in Table 3. Topics reviewed were
relation to the refugee resettlement process, as
personnel and teachers to increase knowledge in
become involved in their child's education. Handbooks
and translation and interpretation services available.
system, bus transportation) support, mental health,
cluded in working with the refugee child. Feedback was
adjustment, and identifying challenges and strategies
refugee populations, refugee mental health and

As seen in Table 2, the schools with the largest
numbers of program participants included Sam Tasby
Middle School, L.L. Hotchkiss Elementary School, Emmett J. Conrad High School, and Lee A. McShan
Jr. Elementary School. Combined, these four
campuses had more than half of the program's
participants.

Table 2
Number and Percent of Students at Schools with Twenty or
More Refugee Students Served in 2009-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>N %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bryan Adams High School</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold W. Lang Sr. Middle School</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skyline High School</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Lowe Sr. Elementary School</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Truett Elementary School</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee A. McShan Jr. Elementary School</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmett J. Conrad High School</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.L. Hotchkiss Elementary School</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam Tasby Middle School</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data was taken from Deltademo on 5/24/10.

Program Activities

To further its goal of supporting academic
achievement for refugee students; tutoring and
instructional support was available and provided at
the student's campus. Translators traveled to Dallas ISD
campuses and provided after-school tutoring to an
estimated 94 students in their native language.

In an effort to provide opportunities for both refugee
students and their families to become accustomed to
the school district and resources accessible to them,
the RSIG program held multiple school orientations
covering a wide range of services in 2009-10. Topics
included an overview of the school system
(attendance requirements, menus, behavior, grading
system, bus transportation) support, mental health,
and translation and interpretation services available.
These meetings were aimed at encouraging parents to
become involved in their child's education. Handbooks
developed by the RSIG program were also provided in
the parents' native language.

Similarly, training sessions were provided to district
personnel and teachers to increase knowledge in
relation to the refugee resettlement process, as
displayed in Table 3. Topics reviewed were
introduction of services for refugee students, instructional strategies for refugee students, current
refugee populations, refugee mental health and
adjustment, and identifying challenges and strategies
in working with the refugee child. Feedback was
collected at each session through surveys
administered by the training presenter, which helped
guide the direction of the trainings.

Table 3
Refugee Support Services Professional Development 2009-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Attended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working with the Refugee Student</td>
<td>08/19/2009</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with the Refugee Student</td>
<td>09/01/2009</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with the Refugee Student</td>
<td>11/04/2009</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee Support Services:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of Services</td>
<td>11/06/2009</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee Support Services:</td>
<td>11/19/2009</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with the Refugee Student</td>
<td>12/09/2009</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with the Refugee Student</td>
<td>12/15/2009</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with the Refugee Student</td>
<td>02/25/2010</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with the Refugee Student</td>
<td>06/05/2010</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with the Refugee Student</td>
<td>06/11/2010</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the summer of June, 2010, the RSIG program
hosted a four-week summer enrichment camp that
offered hands-on activities and thematic lessons in
math, language arts, science and social studies. The
summer enrichment camp served two major purposes:
firstly, to provide orientation and academic services to
non-enrolled refugee students; and secondly, to
continue providing enrichment services to currently
enrolled refugee students in Dallas ISD. The RSIG
summer camp was held at Sam Tasby Middle School
and was attended by 120 Kindergarten through 5th
grade students. Sixty of the summer program refugee
attendees were not enrolled and new to Dallas ISD; it
is expected they will enroll in the district for the 2010-
11 year. The remaining 60 students were currently
enrolled in Dallas ISD schools. Additional activities
provided during the summer camp included field trips
to the Dallas Zoo and Dallas Children's Theater. A
closing highlight was a multi-cultural fair held at the
end of the summer camp program, with student
performances and where parent attendees were
encouraged to bring native entrees to share with other
refugee families.

Program Plans for 2010-2011

The RSIG program is scheduled to receive $128,747
in grant funds for the 2010-2011 school year and
serve an estimated 800 students, continuing to expand
their outreach efforts throughout the district. Program
plans include maintaining professional development
opportunities offered to district personnel and
teachers. Educational and support services will
continue to be provided to refugee parents. Additional
emphasis will be placed on providing services that will
guide refugee students toward making improvements
in academic subjects, attendance and graduation
rates. This could include enhanced tutoring and
instructional services available at a greater number of campuses.

For more information contact Program Evaluation at 972-925-6457.