



## 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

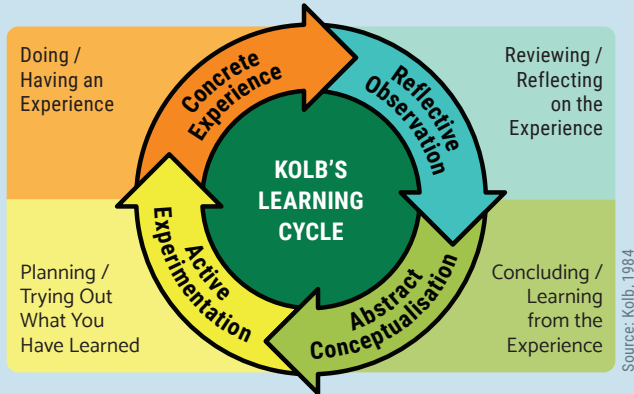


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## Our Model

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.

