

About the River Nile Learning Centre

The River Nile Learning Centre (RNLC) is a charitable organisation that empowers disadvantaged refugee and asylum seeker women through education. We provide them with the opportunity of participating in our community on a more equal footing and prepare them for employment.

RNLC was established in 2006 in response to the African community's concern that many of its children were falling behind their Australian-born counterparts in mainstream schools. It commenced with after-hours tutorials in a hall in Footscray. RNLC has now grown substantially to meet the education needs of other disadvantaged members of our community.

In 2012, RNLC won the Victorian Multicultural Award for Excellence in Education.

Our Programs

We offer the following major programs, free of charge to our students:

- Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), which re-engages young women who have dropped out of mainstream schools;
- English Foundation Program, which develops essential English language, literacy and numeracy skills for new arrivals; and
- VCE EAL (English as an Additional Language) course, which supports entry to VCE, TAFE and university courses

In addition, we offer specialist programs such as swimming, driving, women's health, music and craft to support language and life skill development as well as emotional well-being.



Our students

Our **refugee** students are typically aged 16 to 25 years old, unmarried and of African heritage. They often experience social and community isolation as they are seen as transgressing the social norms through unmarried pregnancy. They are particularly disadvantaged (compared to other refugees) in that most have never been to school prior to arriving in Australia. Our mainstream education system has not been able to cope with students coming from such a disadvantaged background.

Our **asylum seeker** students are typically 18 to 35 years old and of African or Middle Eastern heritage. Many, after having received 50 hours of government sponsored classroom instruction, do not have a basic working knowledge of English. As a consequence, they find it very difficult to function in our community.



What Makes Us Different?

What distinguishes us from schools (and other organisations), is that we provide Individual Learning Plans tailored to meet each student's needs. These plans are supported by a large number of volunteers who tutor the students. As most students have suffered trauma or torture prior to arriving in Australia and continue to suffer here, we provide the additional support necessary for them to survive and study. They are cared for by a social worker, supported by mentors and assisted with public transport costs and basic food staples. The students' children are looked after in our childcare facility, while their mothers study in an adjacent classroom.

All our services are provided free of charge, as our students are unable to afford to pay for their education. No other organisation in Melbourne provides this level of care and service. Without RNLC, our students would not receive an education.



Value for Money

We multiply the benefits of each dollar received through a large number of unpaid volunteers to deliver the services. We have ~100 volunteers, who provide management, tutoring, mentoring, childcare assistance and career advice to the students. In turn, our students multiply the benefits of each dollar by passing on their knowledge and becoming positive role models in their communities.

When you educate the mother, you educate the whole family. Through education RNLC is breaking the cycle of dependence on social welfare of mothers and their children and breaking down the barriers between refugees/asylum seekers and the broader Australian community.

Our Sponsors & Donors

Our sponsors and donors make possible everything we do. Major supporters include:



RNLC is a not-for-profit incorporated association, recognised by the Australian Taxation Office as a Deductible Gift Recipient.

Further Information

Further details of RNLC may be found at www.rnlc.org.au Or please call us on 03 9329 8425 or email info@rnlc.org.au We are located on Level 1 of 117 Capel Street, North Melbourne 3051. Visitors are most welcome at our Learning Centre.