



**Fugees Family**

# Teranga

Advancing Educational Justice  
for English Language Learners



# The Problem with Newcomer Education

The U.S. education system is failing students, and English language learners (ELL) are bearing the weight. With over 5 million ELL students enrolled nationwide, Fugees Academy is the only school network exclusively dedicated to meeting their educational needs.

## Why is refugee and immigrant education a crisis?

Nationwide, refugee children are five times more likely to be out of school than their non-refugee peers. Obstacles like language barriers, cultural differences, and bullying add to the pressures these students face.

Our current systems have no set policies, practices, or requirements for how municipal, state, and/or federal education of ELL students should be handled.

## What you need to know:

- Of **5 million** enrolled ELL students in the American education system, only **14.2%** achieved language proficiency in the 2017-2018 school year.
- **Only 10%** of teachers in the US are qualified to instruct ELL students.
- The national dropout rate of ELL students is **40%**.
- **2 out of 3** students who cannot read proficiently by the end of 4th grade will end up on welfare or in prison.



# Project Teranga



Refugees and immigrants are the fastest growing population in American public schools. In 2016, 35.7% of resettled refugees were younger than 14 years old. 13.9% of them were ages 14-20. That's nearly 50% of an incoming population who rely heavily on the American education system to give them hope of a better life.

**According to the National Education Association, ELL students will account for a quarter of America's public school population by 2025.** These students are the next generation of the American workforce and they deserve a quality education.

**That's why Fugees Academy is on a mission to disrupt education as usual.**

Our global award-winning nonprofit institution is a hyper-innovative, zero-tuition school combining the healing qualities of organized athletics with a customized and rigorous academic curriculum that empowers refugee and immigrant students representing over 23 nationalities. Fugees has taken this proven model from an initial school in Clarkston, GA and opened two more locations in Columbus and Cleveland, OH.

Project Teranga—from a **Senegalese word meaning hospitality, respect, community, solidarity, and sharing**—is a simple and threefold solution to addressing the ELL education crisis: Redesign the schools, Retrain the teachers, and Realign the policies that make up the system. Scaling the Fugees model to newcomer schools across the country presents a clear pathway to educational equity and success nationwide.

# A Three-Pillar Approach

Teranga's three-pillar approach will lead to systemic changes that advance educational justice for ELL students. All three pillars will be implemented simultaneously and will share the same goal: accelerating educational equity for ELL students while contributing to the advancement of all students who are left behind.



## **Pillar 1: Redesigning Schools**



By scaling and replicating our model, which includes holistic English acquisition, integration of athletics for all, a trauma-informed approach to schooling, and year-round programming, we will establish highly functioning ELL education systems in school districts with newcomer programs.



## **Pillar 2: Retraining Teachers**



Our current academies will act as hubs for refining curriculum, allowing educators to participate in online and onsite Fugees-model training that will result in an approved certification from an accredited institution. In this training, teachers will hone their ability to serve ELL students, specifically displaced youth, more effectively. These simulated trainings will fill a void, as none are currently offered by other teacher training programs.



## **Pillar 3: Realigning Policy**



Teranga will support the advocacy of partner organizations working on education issues at the local, state, and federal levels. Policy changes include firm requirements for school districts in relation to ELL program operation, such as increasing the time arriving students spend at newcomer schools and raising the mandatory graduation age. Teranga will provide data and policy briefs to buttress these partner organizations' advocacy efforts.

## A Proven Track Record

Fugees is the only network of U.S. schools dedicated to refugee education. Our students, all classified as ELLs, not only keep up with their peers at public schools; they show faster achievement growth than the national average within a year of enrollment.

Fugees has a 15-year track record of working with refugee students in school settings. Our laser focus on a population that is too often invisible has allowed us to develop and refine a successful model that centers our students and their families in our approach. Fugees students have a 92% high school graduation rate and 100% college acceptance rate.

**“Within one school year, students achieve learning gains of 2 to 2.5 times that of NWEA MAP averages.”**

Fugees Family Case Study (2019)

**Chan  
Zuckerberg  
Initiative** 

## A Recognized Leader

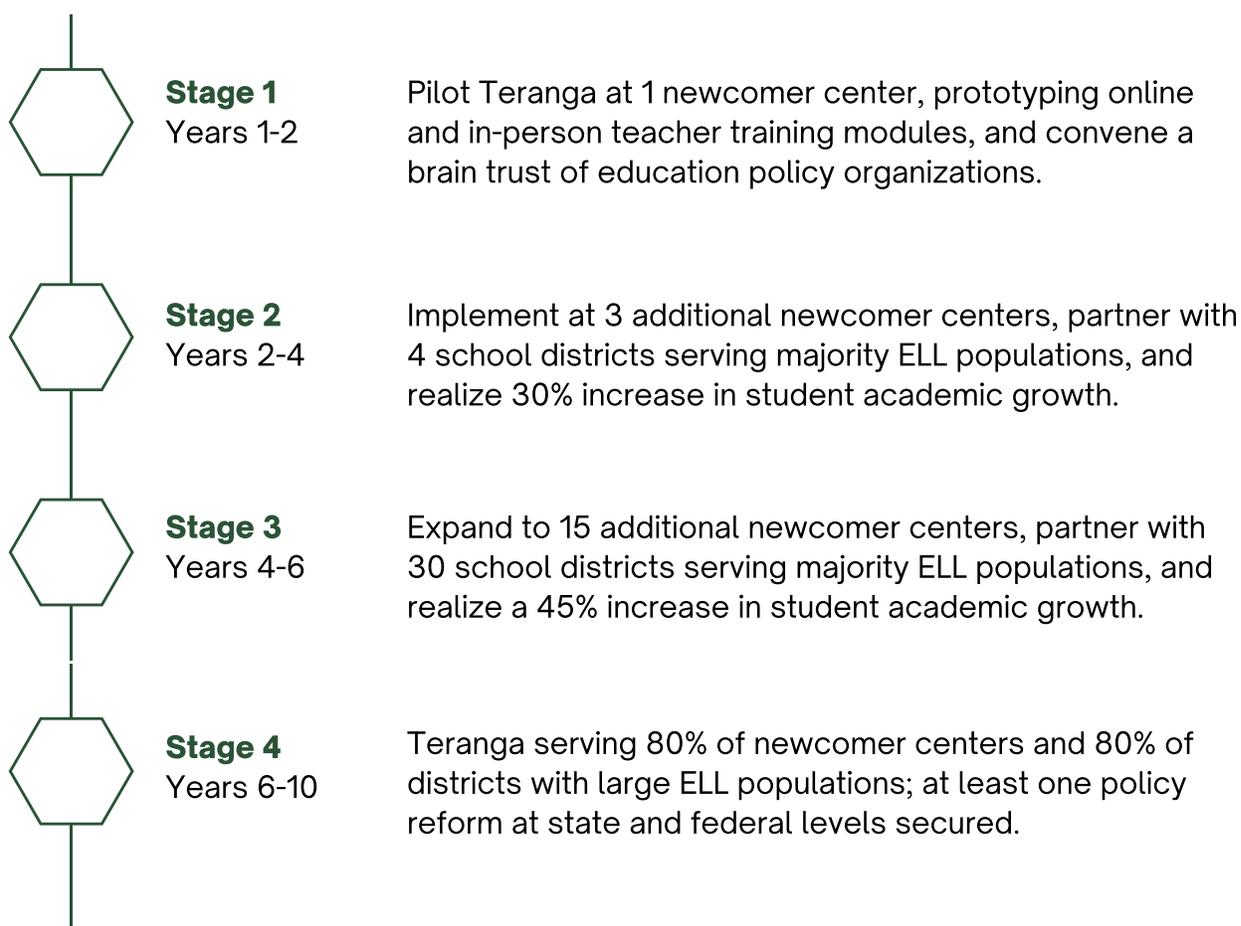
Luma Mufleh is the founder and CEO of Fugees Family, the nonprofit behind our network of schools. As the daughter and granddaughter of Syrian refugees herself, Luma's journey to America included a years-long asylum petition, prompted by the threats to her life as a gay Muslim woman. Having learned to embrace her many identities, Luma's life's work is to ease the burden of belonging for young survivors of war. By empowering them to overcome cultural and language barriers, Fugees Family schools have maintained a 100 percent college acceptance rate for their graduates. That track record has earned Luma and her team national recognition, including by major media outlets like CNN, which named her one of its 2016 Heroes. In 2019, Luma was named an Emerson Collective Dial Fellow and a Manhattan Institute Civil Society Fellow.



**Luma's TED Talk, "Don't feel sorry for refugees—believe in them," has been viewed more than 1.7 million times, and Inc. Magazine named it among the most inspiring of 2017, alongside talks by Elon Musk and Tim Ferriss.**

# Roadmap to Success

Teranga's transformative power stems from its ambitious vision, its practical approach, and its carefully sequenced set of activities. Designed in four stages, these activities form a clear roadmap that charts a ten-year path toward upending the status quo in ELL education. By year 10, Teranga will have fully transitioned all of its intellectual capital to newcomer centers throughout the country, dissolving itself and accomplishing the stated aim of any successful nonprofit—to work ourselves out of a job. To get there, we will accomplish the following:



## Learn more.

For more information about Teranga or to learn how you can help us re-imagine newcomer education in America, please contact:

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