



Inland Empire United Way

School Tools Evaluation 2007-08

Executive Summary

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Introduction

This summary highlights the findings from the outcomes evaluation and teacher surveys of Inland Empire United Way's School Tools program during school year 2007-08. A more detailed analysis of the outcomes and surveys can be found in the full report.

Description of School Tools Program

Schools Tools is a program of the IEUW's KidsSmart initiative. The goal of the program is to provide disadvantaged children with new school supplies, giving them the tools they need to learn and succeed in school. The School Tools program is a collaborative effort involving the Kids In Need Foundation, local schools, businesses, and community volunteers. Many of the children served by this program lack the basic school supplies that other children take for granted; some children have supplies only because their teachers have spent their own money to purchase supplies for them.

During the School Tools program's first year of operation (2006-07 school year), IEUW established a Teacher Resource Center (TRC) at its headquarters in Rancho Cucamonga. Through the TRC, teachers from eligible schools have the unique opportunity to "shop" for supplies for their students and classroom twice a year—completely free of charge. The Teacher Resource Center is available to teachers from select schools in the IEUW service area with more than 70% of its students enrolled in the federal free and reduced meal program. At the TRC, teachers are able to choose from a wide array of products including basic school supplies, fun incentive items, and arts and crafts supplies that encourage creativity.

During the past academic year, School Tools distributed almost \$400,000 worth of goods to local teachers and their students. Other notable achievements for the 2007-2008 program year include:

- Being accepted as an affiliate of the Kids In Need national network
- Increasing the number of schools participating from 13 last year to 21 this year
- Increasing the number of teacher visits from 388 last year to 568 this year
- Increasing the average dollar value of goods distributed per teacher visit by 35%
- Strengthening the volunteer program
- Diversifying funding and supply sources

Highlights from the Analysis

The level of need is great. Overall, teachers estimated that 60% of their students' families could not afford school supplies for their children. Indicators show that a lack of school supplies affects teachers' ability to teach and students' ability to learn and perform academically. It is also clear that many students have other needs that teachers are trying to meet, such as clothing and proper hygiene.

Inland Empire United Way's School Tools program has three outcomes as its goals. They are:

- Low income children are better equipped with the basic tools for learning

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- Teachers are able to enhance their instruction
- Teachers spend less of their own money to purchase supplies their students need

The outcomes analysis showed that low-income children were better equipped with the basic tools for learning. Three indicators were used to measure this outcome and each showed significant positive change. The most dramatic change was the increase in the percent of students who had supplies to complete assignments at home; the percent of students with adequate supplies to complete assignments at home increased from 2% to 97%.

The analysis also showed that teachers were able to enhance their instruction. Each of the three indicators used to measure this outcome showed positive results. 92% of the teachers indicated that they were able to expand or improve their instruction as a result of participating in School Tools.

The results for the final outcome were a bit more ambiguous. While almost half (48%) of the teachers reported spending less money on school supplies than the year before, the average amount spent per teacher increased by \$60. Slightly over one-third (35%) of the teachers increased their spending by an average of \$773.

Other highlights include the difference that teachers report School Tools has made and the level of need that exists, even for teachers and students who have previously participated in School Tools. Some of the comments teachers have made about the effects of School Tools include:

- The impact of incentives on student motivation and attitude
- Arts supplies were very helpful
- Teaching is easier
- Items not normally associated with school such as clothing were helpful
- School Tools items generated new ideas
- Special events such as holidays and birthdays were enhanced because of School Tools

Conclusion

For two of the three School Tools program outcomes, the results clearly show that the program is succeeding in regards to its goals. For Outcome 1, "Low income children are better equipped with the basic tools for learning," and Outcome 2, "Teachers are able to enhance their instruction," the analysis clearly shows that progress has been made. For Outcome 3, "Teachers spend less of their own money to purchase supplies their students need," the results are more ambiguous - many teachers are saving money but almost as many are increasing their spending on student supplies. When compared to the previous year, most program outcomes are improved while the situation that students and teachers face is worse. A possible explanation is that the additional resources that School Tools, its partners, and teachers have provided are outpacing the increase in need. The findings also show although much progress has been made, much remains to be done.