

Zakat Foundation of America's

Refugee Empowerment Programs



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Executive Summary

Zakat Foundation of America's (ZFA) mission is to assist Muslims in fulfilling their Zakat obligations by providing the charity with dignity, while its vision centers on harnessing Zakat as a transformative force for human upliftment and social progress. To realize this vision, the organization implements a diverse array of programs clustered around refugee empowerment, emergency response, food security, livelihood, education, health, and orphan sponsorship. The Refugee Empowerment Projects (REP) span multiple regions, including Kenya, the USA, Afghanistan (via the Afghan Cultural Center), the Rohingya community, Colombia, Honduras, Peru, Venezuela (through St. Barts Shelter), and job placement/training programs for refugees from Ukraine, Afghanistan, and Venezuela. These initiatives focus on cultural support, empowerment, and integration. Complementing REP, the Emergency Response Program (ERP) provides urgent assistance across conflict-affected areas like Sudan, Libya, Lebanon, Jordan, and Ukraine, with specific winter relief projects for Syrian and Palestinian refugees.

Food Security Programs (FSP) ensure nutritional support through Ramadan food packages and *Udhya* meat distribution. Livelihood Programs (LHP) emphasize vocational training, particularly in Jordan's Irbid and Amman centers for Syrian and Palestinian refugees. The Education Program (EDP) supports school development, supplies, higher education through Zahraa University, internships, and tuition aid for medical students, plus education support for orphans in Türkiye. Health & Well-Being Programs (HWP) include cancer treatment sponsorship in Jordan and new health tent services for Sudanese refugees in Chad. Finally, the Orphan Sponsorship Program (OSP) operates across Türkiye, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, and Palestine, providing critical care and support to orphaned children within these communities. The number of beneficiaries of the REP (excluding the USA), FSP, LHP, EDP, HWP, and OSP programs from 2022 to 2025 reached a total of 240,172 beneficiaries, including 43,816 in 2022, 31,913 in 2023, 51,229 in 2024, and a significant 113,214 projected in 2025.

In the United States, the REP supports diverse communities through programs such as Refugee Resettlement & Assistance, the Rohingya Cultural Center (RCC), and the Afghan Cultural Center Inc. (ACCI). Additional initiatives include Job Placement & Training for Ukrainian, Afghan, and Venezuelan refugees, and the St. Barts Shelter serving refugees from Colombia, Honduras, Peru, and Venezuela. The Rohingya Cultural Center (RCC) served a total of 49,836 individuals through case management, job placement, health services, food distribution, youth programs, and academic and childcare support. The Afghan Cultural Center Inc. (ACCI) reached 4,577 beneficiaries through educational workshops, job fairs, legal aid, cultural and religious events, and family support services. The Job Placement and Training initiative for Ukrainian, Afghan, and Venezuelan refugees impacted 29,724 individuals, including 3,431 trained and 1,523 placed in jobs, with significant indirect benefits for family members. The St. Barts Shelter supported 626 direct beneficiaries from Colombia, Honduras, Peru, and Venezuela through family assistance and individual support services. Together, these U.S.-based Refugee Empowerment Projects reached a total of 84,763 beneficiaries through direct support, training, community services, and family assistance. Including the 84,763 beneficiaries from the U.S.-based Refugee Empowerment Projects, the total number of refugees supported through ZFA programs from 2022 to 2025 amounts to 324,935 individuals across all global initiatives.

The impact figures—324,935 refugees supported globally from 2022 to 2025—reflect ZFA's sustained commitment to its mission of empowering displaced populations and restoring dignity through comprehensive, community-based programs. These numbers are not just statistics; they represent lives stabilized through access to food, jobs, education, healthcare, and psychosocial support. The scale and diversity of ZFA's outreach across continents—from vocational training in Jordan to legal support in the U.S.—demonstrate how its vision of holistic refugee empowerment is being realized in practice. This expansive and inclusive approach underscores ZFA's role as a critical force for resilience, integration, and opportunity in some of the world's most vulnerable communities.

ZFA's Refugee Empowerment Projects



Kenya Girls and Women Refugee Empowerment Program

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Overview

Kenya Refugee Empowerment is designed for refugees and supports girls and women who immigrated from Somalia, Congo, Ethiopia, and other neighboring countries.

The global refugee crisis has reached unprecedented levels, with 100 million forcibly displaced individuals worldwide, including 27 million refugees. Kenya remains a key host country, with its refugee population surging from 12,000 in 1988 to 654,187 by September 2023. In urban areas like Nairobi, where 97,400 refugees and asylum seekers reside, 76% are women and children, many of whom face limited access to shelter, education, and health-care. Unaccompanied refugee girls are particularly vulnerable to poverty, abuse, and exploitation. To address these challenges, the Zakat Foundation of America (ZFA) partnered with RefuSHE to empower refugee girls and women through the Girls Empowerment Program (GEP) and Community-Based Protection Program (CBP), focusing on education, vocational training, gender-based violence prevention, and economic empowerment.

SERVICES PROVIDED

Girls Empowerment Program (GEP)

- Participants received training in vocational and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills.
- Life skills sessions covered topics such as self-esteem, leadership, reproductive health, and conflict resolution.
- Girls were supported with transport and daily meals, ensuring class attendance.
- Tailoring students improved dressmaking skills, working on midterm projects.
- ICT students completed Cisco certification, with 86% able to bid for online work.
- Babies in daycare received nutritional meals and early development support.

Community-Based Protection Program (CBP)

- Women trained in family planning and gender-based violence (GBV) awareness.
- Women were educated on GBV prevention by trained anti-GBV champions.
- Women's Ambassador Group (WAG) members received entrepreneurship training.
- Kenyan Shilling was issued as a community revolving fund to help women invest in small businesses.
- Target: Vulnerable refugee girls and women in urban Nairobi and its peri-urban areas.

Location: Nairobi, Kenya, and peri-urban refugee communities.

BENEFICIARIES

10,243 since July 2021.

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- Enhanced financial independence for refugee women through vocational training and entrepreneurship support.
- Greater awareness of Gender Based Violence (GBV) and family planning, improving community health and safety.
- Stronger access to education and life skills training for young refugee women. Childcare support enabled young mothers to attend training programs without disruption.

LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS / CHALLENGES

Lessons Learned

- Targeted recruitment improves engagement in vocational programs.
- Mental health support is crucial for participants' academic and social success.
- GBV awareness in native languages increases participation and community impact.

Recommendations

- Expand funding for skill-building programs to support more women.
- Strengthen mentorship and financial literacy training to improve business sustainability.
- Increase language-specific GBV awareness campaigns for better outreach.

Through education, training, and community support, ZFA and RefuSHE continue to empower refugee women and girls, improving health, financial independence, and social well-being.

REP – United States of America

Afghan Refugees

Afghan Cultural Center Inc (ACCI) - 2023-2024

◆ PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

For over four decades, Afghanistan has faced ongoing conflict, displacement, and humanitarian crises, leaving millions of Afghans vulnerable. The last two decades of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan significantly impacted the Afghan people, reshaping their economic, political, and social landscape.

On August 15, 2021, the Taliban seized control of Kabul, marking the culmination of a rapid takeover of the country. The U.S. military and diplomatic withdrawal, which was part of the February 2020 U.S.-Taliban agreement, was completed on August 30, 2021. In the months following, the United States undertook one of the largest evacuation efforts in its history, welcoming over 100,000 Afghans who were forced to flee due to security threats. Many evacuees included individuals who supported U.S. missions, human rights defenders, political activists, and others at risk under the new regime.

The resettlement journey for Afghan refugees is filled with numerous challenges, including securing employment, accessing education, navigating public services, and integrating into American society while preserving Afghan cultural values. A nationwide housing shortage and the lingering effects of the pandemic have further complicated resettlement efforts, particularly in accessing healthcare and essential social services. Addressing these challenges requires sustained community support, advocacy, and resources.

Project Goal

The Afghan Cultural Center Initiative (ACCI) aims to support Afghan refugees as they transition to life in the United States. By providing access to essential services, educational programs, and cultural preservation initiatives, ACCI seeks to facilitate the integration of Afghan families while ensuring they maintain their heritage and traditions. The initiative also aims to assist with citizenship applications and provide driving lessons for women to enhance their independence and employability.

Project Objective

ACCI is committed to empowering Afghan refugees by offering comprehensive support programs, including:

- Resettlement assistance and family mentorship.
- Online tutoring and educational support for youth.
- Essential item distributions for needy families.
- Driving lessons for Afghan women.
- Citizenship preparation classes.
- Community outreach and resource connections.

ACCI will continue to adapt its services based on the evolving needs of the Afghan refugee community, ensuring they have the tools and support necessary to build stable and successful lives in the United States.

◆ SERVICES

Afghan Cultural Center Inc. provides the following services for Vulnerable Refugees.

- Community Outreach Visits – Guidance on public services, healthcare, transportation, and cultural integration. Distribution of toys, hygiene kits, and stationery.
- Job Fairs – Assistance with job applications, CV writing, and interview preparation.
- Driving Program – Driving lessons for Afghan women to support independence and employment.
- Women's Empowerment Workshop – Education on childcare, public transportation, and community resources.
- Tesla Electricity School – Hands-on training for Afghan youth in electrical work and renewable energy.
- Legal Assistance – Partnered with Hafemann, Magee & Thomas legal firm (HTM) to file claims for Afghan workers under the Defense Base Act.
- Educational & Learning Classes – Regular tutoring and literacy programs for Afghan refugees.
- Citizenship Preparation Classes – Assistance with applications and preparation for U.S. citizenship.
- Religious & Cultural Programs – Holy *Quran* recitations, *Eid* celebrations, and religious community gatherings.
- Sports & Community Engagement – Organizing sports tournaments and community events to foster integration and fundraising initiatives.

Social Services Support – Access to tax filing assistance, funeral services, and advocacy for Afghan families.

◆ BENEFICIARIES

Following are the # of beneficiaries who benefited.

Community & Educational Programs

- Learning Class (weekly): 15 participants
- Leadership Workshop: 15 participants
- Afghan Community Workshop: 15 participants
- Citizenship Preparation Classes: Ongoing participants

Job & Skill Development

- Job Fair: 650 beneficiaries
- Tesla Electricity School: 10 direct beneficiaries (~50 indirect beneficiaries)

Social & Legal Services

- Tax Filing Project: 60 beneficiaries (50 males, 10 female)
- Legal Assistance under the Defense Base Act: Ongoing cases
- Driving Program: 5 direct beneficiaries (~50 indirect beneficiaries)

Cultural & Religious Engagement

- Holy *Quran* Recitation (30 Juz): 70 participants
- *Eid-ul-Fitr* Prayer & Cultural Event: 1,500 attendees
- *Eid-ul-Adha* Prayer & Cultural Gathering: 1,200 attendees

- *Iftar* Community Gathering: 120 attendees
- Refugee Network Workshop: 35 participants
- Weekly Afghan Community Meetings: 20 attendees

Family & Child Support

- Toy Project Distribution (*Eid*): 100 children
- Playroom for Kids: Ongoing service
- Women's Workshop: 18 participants

4,577 Total Beneficiaries

◆ IMPACT

The Afghan Cultural Center Initiative (ACCI) has significantly transformed the lives of Afghan refugees by providing essential support for their resettlement, integration, and long-term stability. Through job fairs, career assistance, and vocational training such as the Tesla Electricity School, many Afghan refugees have successfully secured employment, leading to financial independence and a better future for their families. Women's empowerment programs, including driving classes, have enhanced mobility and self-sufficiency, while educational initiatives like literacy workshops and language classes have helped individuals navigate their new environment with confidence.

Social and cultural gatherings, such as *Eid* celebrations and community meetings, have played a crucial role in preserving Afghan traditions while fostering a sense of belonging and emotional support. Additionally, legal assistance for citizenship applications and Defense Base Act claims has provided families with security and stability. Humanitarian aid, including hygiene kits, school supplies, and tax filing assistance, has alleviated financial burdens, while sports and recreational activities have encouraged youth engagement and community building. The initiative has not only improved economic opportunities but has also strengthened community networks, enhanced mental well-being, and empowered Afghan families to rebuild their lives with dignity and hope.

Rohingya Refugees Rohingya Cultural Center (RCC) 2016-2024

◆ PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

The Rohingya people, a predominantly Muslim ethnic minority from Myanmar's Rakhine State, have faced decades of systemic persecution, discrimination, and violence. Denied citizenship under Myanmar's 1982 Citizenship Law, the Rohingya have been rendered stateless, limiting their access to basic rights, education, and healthcare. They have been subjected to forced displacement, restrictions on movement, and repeated waves of violence.

The crisis escalated in August 2017 when Myanmar's military launched a brutal crackdown in response to attacks by a Rohingya militant group. The military's actions, including mass killings, sexual violence, and the destruction of entire villages, were described by the United Nations as a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing." More than 740,000 Rohingya fled to neighboring Bangladesh, joining hundreds of thousands who had already sought refuge from previous waves of violence.

Today, nearly one million Rohingya live in overcrowded refugee camps in Bangladesh, facing harsh living conditions, limited opportunities, and an uncertain future.

Despite widespread international concern and calls for action, the crisis remains unresolved. In March 2022, the United States officially recognized the atrocities committed by Myanmar's military as genocide. However, violence against the Rohingya persists. On August 23, 2024, the United Nations called on all parties to end hostilities and ensure the protection of civilians under international human rights and humanitarian laws.

In response to the growing needs of the Rohingya diaspora, the Zakat Foundation of America (ZFA) helped establish the Rohingya Cultural Center (RCC) in Chicago to support Rohingya refugees in the United States. Chicago's West Ridge neighborhood has become home to a rapidly growing Rohingya refugee population, many of whom arrive with no formal education and limited English skills. The center provides vital services, including education, case management, health support, citizenship preparation, language classes, youth engagement, cultural preservation, and food assistance. By empowering the Rohingya community, RCC helps refugees rebuild their lives with dignity and self-sufficiency.

Project Goal

The Rohingya Cultural Center (RCC) aims to empower Rohingya refugees in Chicago by providing education, social services, and community support to help them integrate into American society while preserving their cultural identity. Key focus areas include education and language support through ESL classes, citizenship preparation, and academic support for children. Case management services assist with public benefits, job placement, legal support, and housing needs. Health and well-being programs provide health screenings, vaccinations, mental health workshops, and women's wellness initiatives. Youth and community engagement is fostered through religious education, sports programs, cultural preservation efforts, and mentorship. Food and financial assistance initiatives help vulnerable families through food distribution and emergency aid.

Project Objective

The project seeks to expand programming to meet evolving community needs. Increasing employment opportunities by hiring and training Rohingya staff is a priority. Enhancing case management services with tailored support in multiple languages will improve accessibility for the community. Strengthening educational initiatives through ESL, citizenship, and youth programs will help refugees achieve self-sufficiency. Improving health access through partnerships with medical providers will enhance overall well-being. Fostering community engagement through cultural events, advocacy, and interfaith collaboration will build a stronger, more resilient community. Ensuring sustainability through fundraising, partnerships, and volunteer recruitment will allow the center to continue its vital work.

SERVICES PROVIDED

Rohingya Cultural Center provides the following services for Vulnerable Refugees.

Programming

- Adjust programming to community needs.
- Hire and train Rohingya to help Rohingya whenever possible for all services.
- Focus on service and assisting our community, as well as other communities.

Case Management

- Case Management in needed languages.
- Provide needed services.

Translation / Interpretation:

- Translation in needed languages.
- Translating for schools, hospitals, clinics, etc.
- Continue to widen our translation services.
- Assist seniors and disabled in taking the Citizenship test with a translator.

Health

- Mental health workshops: Art therapy sessions, psychoeducation, women's and men's discussion groups.
- Physical health-related workshops: Diabetes, nutrition, substance use, hepatitis, and more.
- Quarterly screenings at RCC: Height, weight, blood pressure, blood glucose.
- Annual vaccines (COVID-19 and flu) and eye testing.
- Continue to explore ways of working with local medical clinics to provide mental health care for those with PTSD, trauma, or any other mental health capabilities.
- Identify and create workshops for common medical issues like Type 2 Diabetes and how diet changes can improve their health. Provide Rohingya with information about medicines they are taking (how to take them, what they are for, and side effects to be aware of).

Adult Education

- ESL and Citizenship Classes for adults.
- Provide childcare for the children of our ESL adults.
- Home English Literacy Program (HELP) for in-home ESL

Youth Support

- Support Rohingya youth through Youth Club, which teaches the importance of education and giving back.
- Enrich children's lives during summer with an evening program to replace Academic Support if funding is available.

- Religious Education for Children.
- Rohingya culture classes for children.
- Academic Support for children with assistance from tutors at neighboring universities.
- Sponsor Soccer teams for our youth and young adults.
- Mentor youth.

Community

- Develop a sense of community and preserve cultural identity.
- Work with Seniors to recover traditional Rohingya stories, songs, and culture.
- Unite the community with dinners and *Iftar* meals during Ramadan.
- Provide religious, food, and financial support during Ramadan including the annual neighborhood *Eid al-Fitr* prayer gathering.
- Work with schools to keep parents better informed and interpret flyers sent home. As well as educate the educators about their Rohingya students.
- Provide a place to gather and share stories.
- Sponsor demonstrations to raise awareness of the Rohingya.
- Rohingya leaders around the world to unite with one voice.



BENEFICIARIES

Following are the # of beneficiaries who benefited.

- 23,515 individuals were also directly reached in Case Management and Job placement.
- 17,606 Individuals directly reached in Health Support and Food Distribution
- 2,075 Individuals directly reached in Youth Sports and Club
- 5,510 Individuals indirectly reached Academic Support, Religious Education, and Childcare Support

49,836 Total Beneficiaries for combined services

Colombia, Honduras, Peru, and Venezuela

St. Barts Shelter (June 2024 to Present)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

St. Barts Shelter was established to address the urgent need for support among asylum seekers arriving in the United States in search of a better life. As the demand for shelter continues to rise, the Zakat Foundation of America (ZFA) launched operations on May 17, 2024, to provide a secure and stable environment.

From the outset, two representatives from the City of Chicago have provided guidance to ensure compliance with all applicable regulations. ZFA has worked closely with the city's designated "Landing Zone," the central hub where buses from various cities arrive. The Landing Zone plays a crucial role in assigning families to shelters, ensuring they receive appropriate accommodations and resources.

Additionally, ZFA has partnered with various city services, including Cook County Health (CCH) for medical care, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) for school enrollment, and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) for health insurance assistance.

Countries of Origin for Refugees

- Colombia: 4.21% (8 individuals)
- Honduras: 1.58% (3 individuals)
- Peru: 1.05% (2 individuals)
- Venezuela: 93.16% (177 individuals)

Project Goal

To provide a safe, stable, and supportive environment for asylum seekers and refugee families, equipping them with the resources, skills, and opportunities needed to transition into independent and dignified living.

Project Objective:

St. Barts Shelter aims to provide a safe and stable refuge for asylum seekers and displaced families, ensuring their immediate needs are met while facilitating long-term stability. The shelter offers secure housing, daily nutritious meals, medical care, and mental health support to promote overall well-being. Residents receive legal assistance for asylum applications, work permits, and health insurance, empowering them to navigate the immigration process. Through job training, resume workshops, and employment support, the shelter fosters economic independence, while educational programs, including school enrollment for children and English classes for adults, aid in their integration. Additionally, community engagement initiatives help residents build social connections, reducing isolation and fostering a sense of belonging. By supporting families in securing stable housing and financial independence, St. Barts Shelter ensures a dignified transition to self-sufficiency.

SERVICES PROVIDED

- **Meal Services:** Residents receive three nutritious meals per day to support their overall well-being.
- **Immediate Safety and Security:** The shelter provides a haven for individuals fleeing violence, persecution, or severe economic distress.
- **Basic Needs Support:** Residents have access to essential resources, including food, clean water, medical care, and sanitation facilities.
- **Health and Well-Being:** Medical care and mental health support are available to help residents address trauma and stress.
- **Stability and Support:** A structured environment offers educational opportunities for children, job training programs, and legal assistance for asylum seekers.
- **Community and Connection:** The shelter fosters a supportive environment that promotes a sense of belonging and helps mitigate isolation among residents.
- **Legal and Administrative Assistance:** Residents receive guidance on asylum applications and integration into new communities. Case managers from Metropolitan Family Services (MFS) assist with asylum applications, work permits, and health insurance inquiries.
- **Medical Services (Until December 31, 2024):** Medical services were provided by Cook County Health (CCH) and included direct consultations with a registered nurse (RN), daily visits to the shelter, transportation to medical appointments, and 24/7 emergency medical assistance. In case of an emergency, residents could be transferred to Stroger Hospital at no cost, regardless of the severity of their condition.
- **Laundry Services:** Laundry facilities are available in the shelter's basement, ensuring that residents have access to clean clothing and bedding.
- **Workshops and Educational Support:** Various organizations have conducted workshops on topics such as "Know Your Rights," job search strategies, resume building, cultural adaptation, and legal assistance.
- **Additional Educational Support Services**
 - **Tax Preparation:** Residents receive guidance on tax filing, particularly those with work permits or pending applications. All current shelter residents possess work permits and Social Security cards, with a few awaiting final processing.
 - **Divvy & Public Transportation Navigation:** Residents are taught how to use public transportation, including the Divvy bike-sharing system.
 - **Tenant Rights:** Residents learn about their rights and responsibilities as tenants, rental requirements, and housing security. Most residents who have exited the shelter have successfully transitioned to independent living, securing employment, obtaining work permits, and saving the necessary funds to move into their apartments.
- **Resume Building & Job Applications:** Training is provided on resume writing, job applications, and interview preparation.
- **English Classes:** Daily English classes help adults improve their language skills and communication abilities.
- **Cultural Adaptation:** Residents receive guidance on societal norms, legal frameworks, and expectations in their new environment.
- **Children's Education & Summer Camp:** All children have access to education, and a nearby church sponsors a summer camp offering both educational and recreational activities.

Additional Services and Donations

- **Transportation Assistance:** Complimentary bus passes are provided to residents without access to transportation. Thanks to generous donors, over 100 bus cards have been distributed to support mobility.
- **Donation Partners:** The shelter's operations are supported by contributions from various organizations and individuals, including CPS, MFS, Northwest Center, private donors, and outreach efforts by shelter managers and coordinators. These donations have provided essential supplies such as clothing, food, diapers, hygiene kits, toys, books, winter coats, school supplies, and materials for children.

BENEFICIARIES

Following are the # of beneficiaries who benefited.

- 109 Beneficiaries Families
- 436 Direct Beneficiaries from Family Support
- 190 Beneficiaries Assisted those who registered without Family:
- 626 Grant Total Direct Beneficiaries

IMPACT

Impact of St. Barts Shelter

Since its inception, St. Bart Shelter has served as a beacon of hope for asylum seekers in Chicago, providing not only a safe refuge but also a pathway to stability and self-sufficiency. The shelter has had a profound and lasting impact on the lives of individuals and families who arrived with uncertainty and left with newfound security and independence.

Transforming Lives

Through dedicated support services, St. Barts Shelter has enabled its residents to move beyond crisis and rebuild their lives with dignity. The majority of families have successfully transitioned into permanent housing, demonstrating the shelter's effectiveness in fostering long-term stability. Residents have been empowered to secure employment, complete essential documentation, and integrate into their new communities. Every family has been supported in finding a sustainable path forward, ensuring that none have had to return to the streets or another shelter.

Holistic Support and Well-Being

By providing access to nutritious meals, healthcare, mental health support, and essential resources, the shelter has addressed both immediate and long-term needs. The partnership with Cook County Health ensured that residents received medical care, while mental health services provided crucial support in navigating the trauma of displacement and migration. Educational workshops, English classes, and job training programs equipped residents with the skills and knowledge needed for self-sufficiency.

Community Engagement and Collaboration

The impact of St. Barts Shelter extends beyond its residents, mobilizing a network of supporters, including city officials, volunteers, donors, and partner organizations. This collaborative model has strengthened the broader community by bringing together individuals committed to social change. Volunteers and donors played a crucial role in securing essential supplies, conducting workshops, and providing mentorship, demonstrating the power of collective action in addressing humanitarian challenges.

A Sustainable Model for Refugee Integration

The success of St. Barts Shelter highlights the importance of structured, community-driven solutions for refugee and asylum seeker integration. By providing not only temporary relief but also equipping individuals with the

skills, knowledge, and resources to sustain themselves, the shelter has set a precedent for future humanitarian efforts. The holistic approach, combining shelter, healthcare, legal assistance, and economic empowerment has proven to be effective in transitioning vulnerable families into independent living.

Lasting Change and a Brighter Future

Beyond numbers and statistics, the true impact of St. Barts Shelter lies in the transformed lives of the families it has served. Parents have secured stable employment, children are enrolled in school, and families have found homes where they can build their futures. What began as a response to an urgent crisis has now become a story of resilience, hope, and empowerment.

The work of St. Bart Shelter stands as a testament to the belief that with the right support, every individual has the potential to rebuild and thrive. Thanks to the dedication of staff, volunteers, and partners, this initiative has provided not only temporary assistance but also lasting change for the families it has served.

Ukraine, Afghan, Venezuelan Refugees Job Placement and Training - 2019-2024

◆ PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

Zakat Foundation of America (ZFA) has long been committed to empowering immigrant and refugee communities by providing them with the necessary resources to build sustainable livelihoods. Recognizing the immense challenges faced by skilled immigrants and refugees in securing meaningful employment in the U.S., ZFA has partnered with Upwardly Global to implement a comprehensive job training and placement program.

Immigrants and refugees are a crucial part of the U.S. economy, projected to drive 100% of the growth in the working-age population by 2035. However, many face significant barriers to employment, including unfamiliarity with the job market, lack of professional networks, skill gaps, and discriminatory hiring practices. Refugees, in particular, struggle with additional obstacles due to the trauma of forced displacement and the rapid resettlement process, which often prioritizes placing them in low-wage jobs rather than skill-aligned positions.

ZFA has responded to these challenges by funding this project to provide career development opportunities that enable skilled immigrants and refugees to secure employment that matches their expertise and education. With a special focus on Ukrainian, Afghan, and Venezuelan refugees, this initiative ensures that they are equipped with the tools and support necessary to integrate into the U.S. workforce successfully.

Goal: To empower immigrant and refugee professionals by providing skill-aligned job training, career coaching, and employment placement opportunities, ensuring equitable access to sustainable livelihoods and economic stability in the U.S.

Objectives

1. Enhance Career Readiness – Provide structured job readiness training, industry-specific career coaching, and access to upskilling opportunities for immigrant and refugee job seekers.
2. Facilitate Skill-Aligned Employment – Support job seekers in securing professional roles that leverage their education, skills, and experience, with a focus on high-demand industries like IT, engineering, and healthcare.
3. Promote Economic Mobility – Increase financial stability by enabling job seekers to achieve an average starting salary of \$65,000, improving household income and access to essential benefits.
4. Advance Workplace Integration – Connect participants with employer partners for mentorship, networking, and hiring opportunities, fostering inclusive workplaces and long-term career growth.

Ensure Gender and Refugee Inclusion – Guarantee that at least 50% of beneficiaries are women and 50% are refugees or asylees, prioritizing support for communities from Ukraine, and Afghanistan.

◆ SERVICES

Through this project, ZFA, in collaboration with Upwardly Global, offers a robust suite of services designed to bridge the employment gap for immigrant and refugee professionals:

- **Job Readiness Training:** Participants engage in self-paced e-learning modules designed to develop essential job-seeking skills, including resume building, interview preparation, and professional networking in the U.S. job market.
- **Industry-Specific Coaching:** Each job seeker is paired with a career coach who provides personalized guidance, mapping their international experience and education to U.S. career pathways in high-demand sectors like IT, engineering, and accounting.
- **Re/Up-skilling Opportunities:** Participants gain access to professional training and certification programs in partnership with institutions such as Google, Coursera, Udemy, and the CITI Program, ensuring their skills remain competitive in the job market.
- **Employer Engagement and Networking:** ZFA supports direct connections between job seekers and top employers, including Accenture, US Cellular, and ADP/Celergo, through mentorship programs, networking events, and skills-building workshops.

Job Placement Assistance: The project facilitates the direct placement of participants into professional roles, aligning their expertise with employment opportunities that offer long-term career growth and financial stability.

◆ BENEFICIARIES

Following are the # of beneficiaries who benefited.

- 3,431 Individuals have received job training
- 1,523 Individuals have secured professional job placements
- 24,770 Indirect beneficiaries have experienced positive ripple effects from the improved economic stability of participants

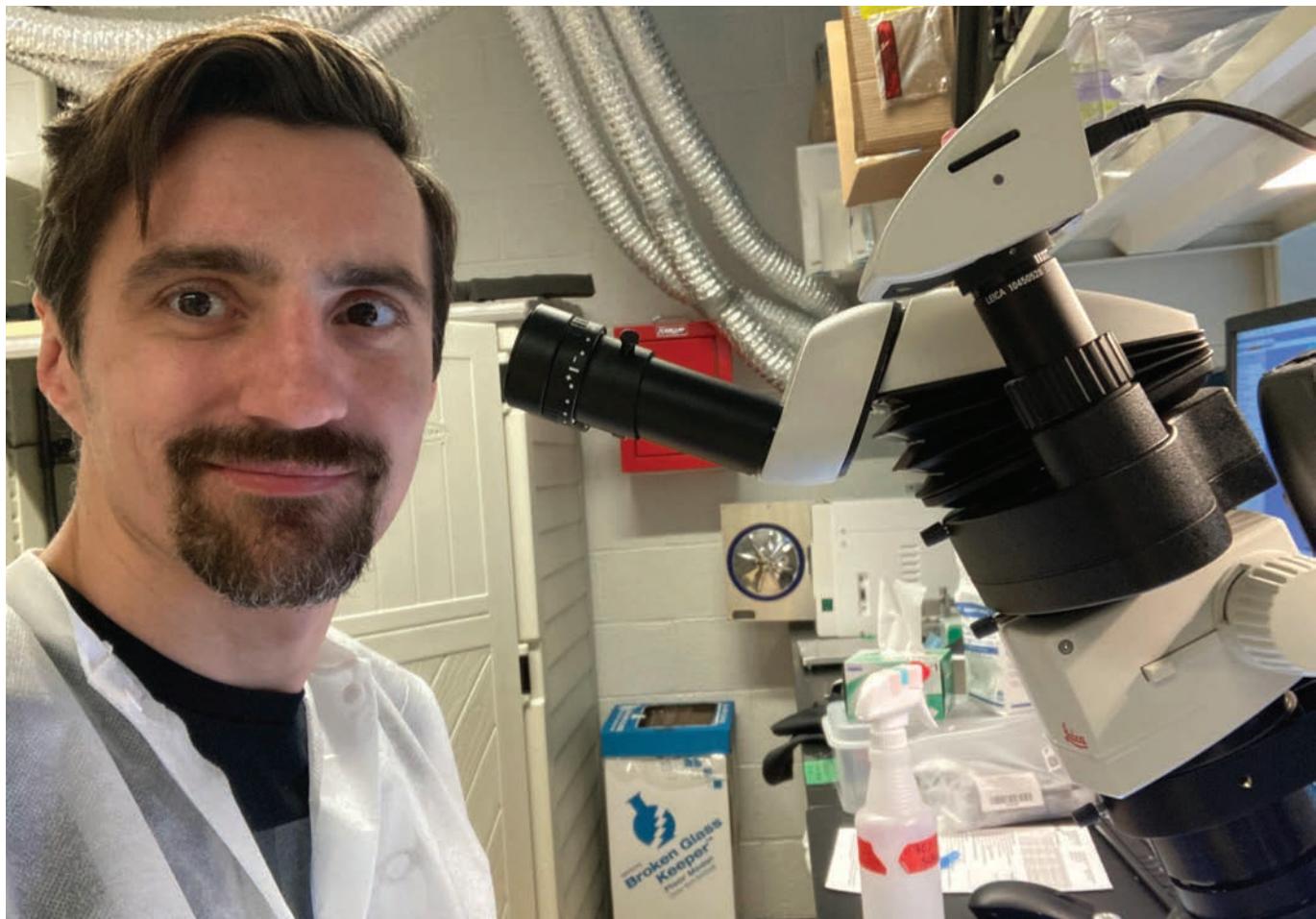
29,724 Total beneficiaries impacted by this initiative

IMPACT

Impact of the Project

ZFA's investment in job training and placement has led to transformative changes for immigrant and refugee professionals. Over the 12 months:

- 3,431 job seekers completed job readiness training, gaining the skills and confidence to pursue professional employment.
- 50% of participants were women, ensuring gender inclusivity in workforce development.
- 1,523 individuals transitioned from poverty and underemployment into skill-aligned roles, significantly improving their financial and career stability.
- Participants secured positions with an average starting salary of \$65,000,
- 85% of job seekers retained their employment for at least one-year position year, demonstrating the sustainability of the program.
- 1,753 dependent children benefited from the financial stability and employment benefits achieved through parental job placement.
- Total Beneficiaries: 29,724 (3,431 direct beneficiaries for job training, 1,523 direct beneficiaries for job placement, and 24,770 indirect beneficiaries).
- ZFA's commitment to empowering immigrants and refugees through sustainable employment initiatives ensures long-term economic self-sufficiency and workforce integration, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.



Emergency Response Program



Sudan Emergency Response via UNHCR

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

Sudan hosts the largest population of internally displaced people globally, with nearly 6.5 million people displaced since the outbreak of armed conflict in April 2023 and 3.8 million internally displaced people (IDPs) before the conflict. The scale of needs surpasses the capacity of humanitarian response efforts, especially in overcrowded gathering sites, such as those in Port Sudan, which host IDPs in more than 150 sites. Many of the 247,000 IDPs in the Red Sea State have been living in makeshift dwellings in gathering sites.

With generous support from the Zakat Foundation of America (ZFA), UNHCR distributed core relief items (CRIs) to 1000 internally displaced families (approximately 5,000 individuals) living in Port Sudan. A full CRI kit includes plastic sheeting, kitchen items, mosquito net, blankets, sleeping mats, and solar light. And partial kits (solar lamp, plastic, sheet, or kitchen set). The CRI distribution is part of UNHCR's large-scale programmatic response to needs inside Sudan. Zakat Foundation of America's partnership helped to ensure that basic core relief items are supported during this important time.

SERVICES

- Distributed 1000 Core Relief Items (CRI)
- Contents in CRI: Plastic sheeting, Blankets, sleeping mats, Kitchen items, Solar lanterns, mosquito nets, Solar lanterns to enhance security and enable families to meet their essential needs after dark and Mosquito net - For refugee families in sub-tropical temperatures, mosquito nets are one of the most effective means of preventing malaria.
- Target Group: Refugees, IDPs, women, girls, children
- Location: Sudan (UNHCR Refugee Camps)

BENEFICIARIES

5000

IMPACT

The provision of core relief items is one of the most critical needs for forcibly displaced people in Sudan, particularly given the vulnerable conditions they face. Through the efforts of ZFA, essential items were distributed, significantly enhancing the safety, health, and protection of displaced families. These supplies have been particularly vital for the well-being of children, who represent 61 percent of the internally displaced population in Sudan. The impact of these relief efforts cannot be overstated, as they play a crucial role in giving families the essential resources to begin to rebuild their lives:

- **Plastic sheeting:** Plastic sheeting is an important shelter component, often in combination with rigid materials, as it offers flexibility and can be used in a variety of ways in both urban and rural settings. Plastic sheeting is often placed on the roof of shelters to keep the interior dry during inclement weather.
- **Blankets:** Blankets are used to provide comfort when temperatures dip at night during the winter months and are also used to provide additional comfort when sleeping on cold, hard ground.
- **Sleeping mats:** Waterproof sleeping mats offer comfort and protection from damp conditions.
- **Kitchen items:** Cooking and serving utensils enable families to prepare and serve warm meals.
- **Solar lanterns:** Solar lanterns enhance security (especially for women and girls) and enable families to meet their essential needs after dark.
- **Mosquito net:** For refugee families in sub-tropical temperatures, mosquito nets are one of the most effective means of preventing malaria.
- **Jerry can:** Jerry cans enable families to collect and store clean water, helping to reduce water-borne diseases

LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS / CHALLENGES

The conflict that began in April 2023 in Sudan continues unabated and has become the largest humanitarian crisis in the region and one of the largest worldwide. The situation remains highly volatile, with intense clashes and airstrikes recently reported in Khartoum, Khartoum North, Omdurman (Khartoum State), Al Jazirah, Sennar, North Kordofan, Nyala in South Darfur and El Fasher in North Darfur state.

Displacement, both within and outside the country, is expected to continue, due to the ongoing conflict, insecurity, economic collapse, impending famine, and the deterioration or complete breakdown in some areas of key public services such as healthcare and education.

ZFA continued delivering food and hygiene packages (outside of the current reporting period).

Libya Emergency Response (Refugees from Sudan, Chad)

◆ PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

- The Libya flood damaged key roads and infrastructure, making it difficult for food suppliers to restock markets and for aid organizations to distribute supplies efficiently.
- Thousands of families remained displaced in temporary shelters, where access to nutritious meals remained a challenge.

As a result, ZFA extended the provision of food packages. (Phase II)

◆ SERVICES

- 1000 food packages distributed in Darna
- 1000 food packages distributed in Misrata
- **Contents:** Contents: Rice - Al Duha, Tomatoes Sauce - Al Jayed, Cooking Oil - Al Baraka/ Afia, Pasta - Sabika/ Brema, Wheat Flour - Al Rebea, Sugar - Al Usra, Tuna - Janzour/ Al Kabtan, Peas - Al Tayebat, Salt, Tea - Al Zahraa, Milk - Al Jayed/ Stalingrad
- **Target:** Libyans and refugees from Sudan and Chad in Darna and Misrata
- **Location:** Darna and Misrata

◆ BENEFICIARIES

10,100

◆ IMPACT

Expanded Food Access: The additional 2,000 food packages provided much-needed relief to flood survivors in Derna and Misrata, reaching a larger population in need.

◆ LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS / CHALLENGES

The crisis underscored the importance of establishing local partnerships to enhance the efficiency of emergency response efforts. ZFA partnered with a reputable local NGO, ensuring a faster, culturally relevant, and community-driven response.

In February 2024, one of the Libya NGO staff recently paid a courtesy visit to ZFA and met with the ED and ZFA staff.

Lebanon Emergency Response (Syrian and Palestinian Refugees)

◆ PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

Lebanon faced a multifaceted humanitarian crisis driven by escalating conflict, economic collapse, and widespread displacement. The resurgence of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel in October 2023 led to over 3,500 deaths and 15,000 injuries in Lebanon, with approximately 1.3 million people displaced by late 2024. The conflict severely damaged infrastructure, including healthcare facilities, with reports of attacks on hospitals and ambulances, resulting in the deaths of numerous healthcare workers.

◆ SERVICES

2023

Family Food Package:

- **Hot meals:** 1.5 kg
- **Water Gallon:** 10 L
- **Bread Bag:** Large
- **Vegetable Bag:** 0.5 kg
- **Date Bag:** 0.2 kg

2024

- Food Parcels: 1,000 families received food parcels, providing stable access to basic food and nutritional support.
- Ready-to-eat parcels: 1,000 families received ready-to-eat parcels, providing immediate nutrition without the need for cooking utensils, which is particularly valuable in shelters.
- Hygiene kits: 1,000 hygiene kits were distributed, enabling families to maintain personal cleanliness and reduce the spread of disease in densely populated shelters.
- Hot meals (family size): 200 hot meals were distributed to families, providing warmth, comfort, and sustenance to households experiencing acute displacement stress.

2025

Emergency Aid Delivered:

- 1,000 food parcels & 380 ready-to-eat meals
- 1,000 heating fuel units (20L each)
- 950 blankets & 450 mattresses
- 690 winter clothing vouchers
- 648 candy bags for children
- Beneficiaries Breakdown:
 - Adult females: 8,090
 - Adult males: 5,000
 - Girls: 8,000
 - Boys: 7,000
 - Female-headed households: 3,618
 - Male-headed households: 2,000
- **Target:** Syrian and Palestinian refugees and local communities in shelter and guest houses
- **Location:** Beqaa governorate-Kfar Danis and Kamed Allouz

◆ BENEFICIARIES

45,426 Beneficiaries

- 1,336 beneficiaries in 2023
- 16,000 beneficiaries in 2024
- 28,090 beneficiaries in 2025

◆ IMPACT

2023

- The Zakat Foundation's emergency relief project played a crucial role, providing essential supplies to 300 families seeking refuge in shelters over 3 to 4 days—1000 hot meals, 1000 gallons of water, and 1000 bags of bread, vegan, ables and dates, —as they relocated from the south to Beqaa specifically areas of Kfar Danis and Kamed Allouz villages. The significance of this instant relief in this situation cannot be overstated; it not only fulfills immediate physical needs but also restores dignity and alleviates the overwhelming sense of need.
- This project served as a vital lifeline during crises, offering hope and essential sustenance to those displaced by the conflict.

2024

- The main achievement of the project was the efficient distribution of basic non-food items to meet the immediate needs of 3,200 vulnerable families, with an average of five people per family, for a total of approximately 16,000 beneficiaries. These items provided critical support to individuals in severely affected communities, ensuring they had the necessary items for daily survival and hygiene.

2025

- Access to clean water and hygiene supplies improved community health and reduced the risk of waterborne diseases.
- Reopening schools and supporting healthcare services helped restore a sense of normalcy and hope, particularly for children and vulnerable populations.
- Heating support initiatives reduced harmful coping mechanisms like burning trash and lowering public health risks.

◆ LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS / CHALLENGES

Key lessons include the importance of conducting thorough pre-distribution assessments to address families' most urgent needs effectively.

Lebanon Winter Relief (Syrian and Palestinian Refugees)

◆ PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

In Lebanon, winter exacerbates the harsh conditions, with power cuts, fuel shortages, and an 800% increase in essential item prices. Many families face severe economic hardship, job losses, and inflation, making basic needs unaffordable.

The country suffers from severe shortages in electricity, communications, fuel, and medicines, impacting nutrition and healthcare. Syrian and Palestinian refugees, along with vulnerable Lebanese families, are particularly affected, with 90% of Syrian refugees living in extreme poverty and half being food insecure.

This winter relief project was implemented to reduce negative coping strategies for children, women, and the elderly by providing essential relief items to the most affected Syrian refugees through the provision distribution of several relief winter aid items.

◆ SERVICES

- **Winter package containing:** Fuel, sleeping kit (blankets), Heaters and fuel, Wool kit for kids, boots and jackets for kids, food parcels
- **Target:** Syrian and Palestinian Refugees
- **Location:** Aarsal and Beqaa Syrian Refugee Camps
- Distributed essential winter supplies (fuel, blankets, food, heaters, wool kits) to over 22,000 Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese families.
- Aided 7,865 beneficiaries in 2024 with fuel, blankets, food, boots, and jackets, addressing immediate needs and providing relief during harsh winters.
- Provided 500 fuel gallons, 200 hot meals, and 200 blankets to 4,500 beneficiaries in Beqaa and Aarsal in February 2022.
- Installed 100 plastic sheets in Moalimeen camp, Aarsal, enhancing shelter conditions during the winter season.
- Supported 1,600 families in 2024 with critical winter assistance, including food, fuel, and heating supplies, to combat Lebanon's economic and weather-related challenges.

◆ BENEFICIARIES

20,939 since July 2021

◆ IMPACT

- The winterization program strengthened two main social services: relief and health. In the short term, vulnerable individuals received core relief items, enabling them to cope with the cold winter, which they could not afford due to poverty. In the long term, the winter assistance project implemented risk-mitigation procedures among vulnerable families, ultimately reducing the fatality rate caused by cold winters in poor and elevated areas.
- Improved living conditions and resilience for over 22,000 beneficiaries through winter aid.
- Reduced health risks and illness exposure during harsh winters by providing essential supplies.

- Strengthened social cohesion and trust between refugees and local communities.
- Enhanced food security and well-being through food parcel distributions.
- Increased community resilience, focusing on long-term self-sufficiency.

◆ LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS / CHALLENGES

- Effective communication and coordination are crucial for successful aid distribution.
- Sustainable solutions focusing on resilience and vulnerable groups should be prioritized, particularly women, children, and people with disabilities.
- Swift action and local partnerships are vital for responding to unpredictable crises.
- Pre-distribution assessments are essential to meet families' immediate winter needs.
- Strengthening partnerships with local organizations, implementing flexible frameworks, and collecting regular beneficiary feedback will streamline aid delivery and improve future distributions.

Jordan Winter Relief (Syrian and Palestinian Refugees)

◆ PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

The ZFA Jordan Office implements an annual Winter Relief Program to deliver critical assistance to vulnerable communities, ensuring they have the necessary support to withstand harsh winter conditions.

◆ SERVICES

- **Winter Items Distributed:** 700 Blankets, 78 Plastic Sheets, 1000 cloth coupons
- **Target:** Syrian and Palestinian Refugees, orphans, needy families
- **Location:** Amman, Irbid, Zarqa, Ajloun, and Host Communities, Informal camps for Syrian refugees in Madaba and other locations.
- **Beneficiary Reach:** Supported a total of 4,973 beneficiaries across three years, providing essential aid such as clothing coupons, winter packages, blankets, and plastic sheets.
- **Distribution Efforts:** Successfully distributed coupons, winter packages, blankets, and clothing items across various regions in Jordan, including Amman, Irbid, Zarqa, and Ajloun.
- **Partnerships:** Partnered with vendors and organizations to ensure high-quality supplies and efficient distribution networks.
- **Targeted Support:** Provided specific aid to vulnerable groups, including orphans, Syrian refugees, and children with cancer from Gaza.
- **Geographic Expansion:** Expanded aid distribution to include communities in Al Tafeli, Madaba, and Gaza.

◆ BENEFICIARIES

5,873

◆ IMPACT

- Enhanced Well-being: Improved the well-being of vulnerable populations by providing essential items like clothing, blankets, and winter packages.
- Empowerment through Choice: Enabled beneficiaries to select their clothing through coupon distribution, promoting dignity and autonomy.
- Regional Outreach: Extended support to diverse communities across Jordan, including Syrian refugees and children with cancer from Gaza.
- Strengthened Community Bonds: Fostered stronger community ties by partnering with local organizations and vendors for aid distribution.
- Resilience Building: Contributed to building resilience among beneficiaries by providing timely and targeted support during challenging times.

◆ LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS / CHALLENGES

- Timely Funding: Ensure early funds transfer to avoid project delays and ensure smooth implementation.
- Communication and Transparency: Strengthen communication strategies to enhance stakeholder trust and transparency.
- Strategic Flexibility: Develop adaptable strategies to respond to changing needs and environments.
- Capacity Building: Invest in team capacity building to enhance skills and adaptability.
- Partnership Strengthening: Foster strong partnerships with organizations and community groups for better resource allocation.

Ukraine Emergency Response

◆ PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

Early March 2022, as the conflict escalated in Ukraine hundreds and thousands of people had no safe water or electricity. Families were terrified and forced to seek refuge in subways and shelters, flee their homes to find safety either within Ukraine or in neighboring countries.

◆ SERVICES

FA response to refugees fleeing to neighboring countries:

- **Basarabeasca border:** Hygiene kits and canned food for these clinics.
- **Chisinau region:** Hygiene materials, paper cups/plates, socks, and s for 800 people staying at the municipal gym.
- **Comrat region:** Blankets, sheets, and food.

◆ BENEFICIARIES

- 1000 Ukrainian refugees were reached in Moldova. 800 in Chisinau.
- 1800 total.

IMPACT

Humanitarian aid work has been carried out in Moldova to help Ukrainians fleeing war.

Food Security Program



Ramadan Food Packages Distribution Program

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

The Ramadan Food Packages Distribution program has supported vulnerable populations including refugees, low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities across Lebanon, Jordan, and Sudanese refugees in Chad. Initiatives involved registering beneficiaries, setting up distribution warehouses, and delivering prepackaged food to avoid overcrowding and ensure efficient logistics.

SERVICES

- Conducted registrations at local points and via phone for easier access.
- Assisted at community centers for those without internet access during registration.
- Established a centralized warehouse for organizing the distribution of materials.
- Prepackaged food packages to streamline distribution and avoid overcrowding.

- Distributed 200 food packages weekly, reaching 200 beneficiaries in total.
- Reached a total of 1,000 beneficiaries through food packages, *Iftar* meals, and *Eid* gifts.
- Supported 20,990+ Ramadan beneficiaries over 4 years.
- Distributed 2,785+ food packages and 4,165+ *iftar* meals.
- Gave out 100 *Eid* gifts for the first time in 2025.
- Steady growth each year, reaching a peak of 13,700 beneficiaries in 2025.

Continued impact through food security and Ramadan support initiatives.

◆ BENEFICIARIES

- 55,006 since July 2021
- 7,550 Eritrean Refugees in Sudan
- 11, Syrian Refugees in Turkiye
- 2,650 Sudanese Refugees in Egypt
- 12,260 Syrian and Palestinian Refugees in Jordan
- 20,045 Syrian and Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon

◆ IMPACT

- Improved access to food and nutrition, community collaboration, and supported spiritual traditions.
- Enhanced resilience and inclusion by prioritizing single-parent households and disabled individuals.

◆ LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS / CHALLENGES

- Managing scale was logistically complex; preplanning and flexible registration improved efficiency.
- Lebanon faced ongoing severe food insecurity; chicken in meals appreciated.
- Recommended early budgeting and expansion to underserved areas.

Udhiya Meat Packages Distribution

◆ PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

The *Udhiya (Qurbani)* Program is one of the Zakat Foundation of America's cornerstone initiatives, designed to ensure that vulnerable Muslim families are able to partake in the blessings of *Eid al-Adha*. Each year, fresh meat packages are distributed to impoverished households, refugees, and other disadvantaged groups, enabling them to celebrate the holiday with dignity. Animals (primarily cows, goats, and sheep) are purchased directly from local farmers or community markets to ensure cost efficiency and support the local economy. Procurement is conducted through a transparent process, comparing offers from multiple vendors, with contracts awarded based on both price and quality. Once procured, animals are kept in local stockyards or entrusted to community leaders (such as Imams) for safekeeping until the day of sacrifice. Meat distribution is managed by Trusted ZFA Partners, ZFA staff and local volunteers, often in collaboration with district administration offices, women and children's affairs offices, and other community-based organizations. Registered beneficiaries gather at central distribution points, while home delivery is arranged for the elderly, widows, or persons with disabilities who cannot travel.

◆ PROGRAM DELIVERED

- 2–8 kilograms of fresh meat distributed per household, adjusted according to family size.
- Essential food items such as oil, rice, and onions included alongside meat when needed to enhance nutrition.
- Special *Eid* gifts for orphaned children, ensuring they too experience joy and inclusion during the holiday.

◆ BENEFICIARIES

50,928 since July 2021:

The program prioritizes families living in extreme poverty, widows, orphan households, elderly individuals, refugees, and persons with disabilities. Between July 2021 and 2025, the *Udhiya* Program has reached more than **50,000 beneficiaries** across multiple countries, including:

- 5,800 Eritrean refugees in Sudan
- 31,921 Syrian refugees in Türkiye
- 5,710 Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Jordan
- 7,497 Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon

◆ IMPACT ON COMMUNITY

Beneficiaries consistently highlight the value of the program in restoring dignity and joy during *Eid*. Many noted that without *Udhiya* support, they would not have been able to provide meat for their families. Local sourcing also stimulates markets and strengthens relationships between ZFA, government bodies, and community associations.

Beneficiaries expressed gratitude

- "We appreciate the support of ZF for making it possible for us to enjoy the 2025 *Eid*", said beneficiaries."
- "My heartfelt appreciation to ZF for the thoughtful *Eid* meat distribution package. You have really put a smile on our faces, and joy in our hearts".
- "I thank you so much for the meat, rice and oil. I am so happy to receive this package, and I pray Allah will give you more of what you have spent on me".

◆ IMPACT ON COMMUNITY

Global Context

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), over 820 million people globally face food insecurity, and protein-rich foods like meat remain out of reach for many poor families. Programs such as *Udhiya* not only provide immediate relief but also contribute to improved nutrition during festive seasons when inclusion and dignity are particularly significant.

Lessons Learned

- Strong engagement of local administrative authorities ensures accurate beneficiary targeting and efficient delivery.
- Partnerships with state aid associations and community groups are critical in reaching the most vulnerable.
- Combining *Udhiya* with complementary programs such as rice packages and oil distribution enhances household food security, ensures balanced nutrition, and maximizes the overall impact of seasonal assistance.

Livelihood Program



Jordan

Irbid City Vocational Training Centers Syrian and Palestinian Refugees

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

The objective of the Livelihood Program is to reduce poverty and inequality by generating employment among poor households and by moving highly vulnerable households into sustainable livelihoods and toward economic stability.

SERVICES

- Vocational and IT training programs –Handcraft, sewing, embroidery, English, computer skills, mosaic and soft skills, handcraft, graphic design, social media, and data entry.
- Target: Vulnerable, and marginalized families, breadwinner mothers.
- Location: Irbid, Jordan

IMPACT

Collaborations:

- Directorate of General Security Graduation of 27 trainees in the safe family course in the presence of the director of the Irbid Security Office and a group of officers from the community police.

- Arab Women's Association working on a workshop about group psychological support.
- The Chamber of Industry in Irbid had a meeting to assign several trainees to work in factories and invite them to a job fair.
- The Crown Prince Foundation Office Attending a dialogue session with the director of the Crown Prince Foundation office in Irbid and agreeing on a mutual visit to achieve cooperation between us.

LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS / CHALLENGES

Lessons Learned:

- Develop an annual work plan outlining materials, timelines, and quantities for each course to ensure full coverage.
- Improve supplier selection processes by obtaining competitive price quotations and refining procurement methods.
- Renew trainer contracts to clarify service terms, payment details, and rights, ensuring service continuity and quality.

Recommendations:

- Implement a new registration system to streamline processes and improve workflow efficiency.
- Establish formal agreements to enhance operational consistency and collaboration.

Challenges:

- Introducing procurement strategies resulted in a delay in the provision of essential materials for courses and workshops.
- Orienting employees with the updated requirements to enhance efficiency in course operations.
- Procuring a color printer.
- Moving to the new building and restoring the general work system.

Jordan

Amman Vocational Training Center Syrian and Palestinian Refugees

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

In 2023, the Zakat Foundation of America's Jordan Office inaugurated an additional Skills Development Center in Amman, (the 2nd center) aimed at empowering youth and young professionals helping students enhance their skills, and making them better equipped to contribute to the Jordanian workforce. This program is designed to help individuals overcome financial challenges and improve the quality of life for themselves and their families.

SERVICES

- Close to a total of 4,196 beneficiaries so far.
- Significant growth in enrollment and graduates, increasing from 172 enrollments and 109 graduates in 2023 to 602 enrollments and 531 graduates in 2024, with continued strong numbers in early 2025 (222 enrollments, 195 graduates).

- Delivered diverse vocational courses including financial literacy, digital skills, graphic design, soft skills, and English; introduced specialized programs in entrepreneurship, project management, and tailored training for people with disabilities.
- Established new partnerships with local organizations, charities, government bodies (Ministry of Social Development), and schools (Ain Jalut) to broaden the reach and enhance training quality, including programs for orphans and youth.
- Expanded training reaches southern regions (Tafila, Ma'an) and diverse groups, including orphans and people with disabilities.
- Opened a new training center involving international and local stakeholders; organized multiple graduation ceremonies, recreational activities, and community events such as Ramadan *Iftar* to foster community and team building.
- Achieved high graduation rates leading to employment and private project startups among trainees, demonstrating a strong impact on youth development and workforce readiness.
- Training courses Provided:
 - Graphic Design (Adobe), CDL, Digital Literacy, Hand Craft, Financial Literacy, Soft Skills,
- Target: Vulnerable, and marginalized communities:
 - Vulnerable Youth (ages 18-25).
 - Vulnerable Children (ages 12-17).
 - Breadwinner mothers.
- Location: Amman and other Governorates (for workshops).

BENEFICIARIES

4,196 Since 2023

IMPACT

Key Achievements:

- Expanded partnerships with civil society organizations and local charities.
- Delivered market-aligned training courses, including programs for people with disabilities.
- Facilitated workforce integration, with trainees successfully entering the labor market.

Major Events:

- Business Lunch Meeting: Discussed new institutional policies and implementation strategies.
- Training Center Launch: Hosted at the Regency Hotel with an American delegation and key stakeholders to strengthen partnerships.
- TOT Financial Education Workshop (Aug 20–31, 2023): Provided 25 training hours on personal skills and entrepreneurship, leading to new student-led businesses.
- Handicrafts Course (Oct 29–Dec 21, 2023): Taught mosaic art and clay crafting, resulting in 10 mosaic and 10 clay pieces over 48 training hours.

This report showcases strategic collaborations, impactful training programs, and tangible outcomes that have contributed to economic empowerment and workforce development.

LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS / CHALLENGES

Upgraded and streamlined registration systems were implemented as essential to improve efficiency and meet evolving training center needs.

Resolve technical issues in Photoshop tools to support high-quality design training, enabling trainees to create professional designs and generate income.

Expand course offerings to align with market demands and strengthen collaborations with organizations to improve trainee recruitment.

Continuously improve training center operations



Education Program

School & Curriculum Development (Syrian and Palestinian Refugees) Jordan School Caravan Project (Since 2023)

◆ PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

Children in Jordan's refugee camps struggle with literacy due to limited access to formal education, as traditional school systems are often disrupted in camp settings like refugee and IDP camps.

To address this, efforts are focused on expanding access to non-formal education for both boys and girls, ensuring they receive essential literacy and learning opportunities within camp schools.

SERVICES

- The program was initiated in January 2023 to teach basic education (Arabic and Math).
- Work on the skills building for children.
- Target: Children between 5-17 years old. (refugees)
- Location: Madaba – (Um Alamat and Um Rumaneh).
- Benefited a total of 235 individuals.
- Provided Arabic and mathematics education at Um Alamat and Um Rumaneh Caravans with 87% student commitment.
- Established a new Caravan at Um Rumaneh in December 2023, enrolling 35 students aged 6 to 15.
- Enrolled 80 students in 2024 and 120 students in 2025.
- Conducted pre-tests and post-tests, showing significant improvements in student performance.
- Developed a new advanced curriculum based on post-test results.
- Created a recreational area at both Caravans to enhance student motivation and performance.

IMPACT

The caravan persisted in providing a stimulating and conducive educational environment, which contributed to enhancing the students' progress and improving their proficiency in both Arabic and mathematics. It effectively delivered education, resulting in noticeable advancements in the student's performance based on the conducted assessments.

Through regular monitoring of the student's progress, it is evident that the situation is consistently improving. This reflects the caravan's commitment and ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of education provided to the students at Um Rumaneh and UM Alamat Caravans.

- Improved Access to Education
- Increased Student Engagement and Retention
- Enhanced Academic Performance
- Skills Development
- Positive Social Environment

LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS / CHALLENGES

- Regular follow-up with teachers ensures consistent teaching quality and student progress.
- Collaborating with civil society organizations expands reach and impact, enabling more comprehensive support.
- Strong stakeholder coordination is key to overcoming challenges and enhancing the effectiveness of educational initiatives.

Jordan School Supply Project

◆ PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

This initiative addresses the problem of limited access to education and the economic challenges faced by students and their families. By providing basic school supplies, alleviating financial burdens, and encouraging students to attend school, the initiative aims to enhance educational access and support the education of orphans, ultimately promoting better opportunities and outcomes for the students and their families.

◆ SERVICES

- 3,214 individual beneficiaries of school bags and supplies from 2022 to 2024, which includes 700 orphans.
- Distributed school bags and food packages across various cities, including Amman, Zarqa, Irbid, Ajloun, and Madaba.
- Organized recreational activities in Galaxy Park and Sunny Bunny and held a nasheed party for orphans and their families.
- Supported Syrian refugees in Madaba camps.
- Selected vendors based on quality and cost-efficiency.
- Collaborated with local schools and societies in multiple cities for distribution.
- Target: Orphans, refugees, students, needy families
- Location: Amman, Irbia, Zarqa, Ajloun, Madaba, targeting Syrian refugees.

◆ BENEFICIARIES

3,214

◆ IMPACT

- Improved access to education for students, especially orphans and those from low-income families.
- Reduced financial burden on families by providing basic school supplies and bags.
- Encouraged school attendance and supported students in continuing their education.
- Promoted equal learning opportunities and reduced dropout risk due to lack of materials.
- Motivated outstanding students to excel and pursue their studies further.

◆ LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS / CHALLENGES

Regular follow-ups will be conducted through school and home visits to ensure students are adjusting well and maintaining a good relationship with their school environment.

Higher Education & Training

Zahraa University

◆ PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

The Syrian civil war caused the largest refugee crisis of the 21st century, forcing millions to flee their homes and disrupting countless educational journeys. In response to this urgent need, Al-Zahraa University was established in 2015 in Gaziantep, Türkiye, as a pioneering institution dedicated to Syrian refugees.

◆ SERVICES

2015

The Syrian refugee crisis became one of the largest displacement emergencies in modern history. In response, Al-Zahraa University opened its doors in 2015 in Gaziantep, Türkiye, offering higher education opportunities to Syrian students and professors displaced by the war. Courses were delivered in Arabic—the native language of the students—and taught by Syrian educators in exile.

2016

By 2016, Al-Zahraa University, operated entirely by and for Syrian refugees, was rapidly expanding. Student scholarships and faculty salaries were sponsored by ZFA, enabling the university to support a growing academic community.

2017

The university continued its unparalleled success, establishing six faculties: Economics, Computer Engineering, Education, English, Arabic, and Theology.

Key achievements in 2017 included:

- 710 employed certified graduates
- 560 Arabic studies enrollees
- 236-degree graduates
- 230 college preparatory enrollees
- 13 professors
- 19 branch teachers
- 14 administrative staff

2018

In July 2018, Al-Zahraa University celebrated a major milestone, graduating its first class of degreed students. The ceremony was attended by dignitaries and academics from around the world, underscoring the university's growing reputation.

2019

The university continued its impact, graduating its second class of students. That same year, Al-Zahraa University achieved full accreditation for its programs in applied sciences, natural sciences, languages, and religious studies.

2020-2021

Between 2015 and the end of 2021, Al-Zahraa University graduated approximately 1,000 men and women across disciplines such as engineering, education, economics, and theology.

The program concluded operations at the end of 2021, leaving a legacy of educational opportunity and hope for thousands of Syrian refugees

◆ IMPACT

- Zahraa University was an exclusive program operated by Syrian staff, professors, and administrators, designed specifically for Syrian refugee students whose education had been disrupted by war.
- The program provided comprehensive support—covering tuition, educational materials, facilities, food, and accommodation—entirely free of charge.
- Through access to quality education, Zahraa University offered students renewed hope, enabling them to continue their academic journeys despite the hardships they faced.
- Graduates of the program stand as powerful symbols of the transformative potential of education, advancing toward a future rooted in equity and justice.
- By completing their studies and earning professional degrees, these students are now equipped to rebuild their lives and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

◆ LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS / CHALLENGES

Student testimonies:

- "In Syria, I wouldn't get this opportunity to study because of war. I believe good days are waiting for me. As well as for my country."
- "Zahraa University helped me survive and stay positive."

Internship and Tuition Support for Gaza Medical Students in Egypt

◆ PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

The project has been initiated due to the bombardment of Gaza. Families in and outside Gaza, who have connections to Gaza have all been impacted. Leonard Education Organization has nearly a dozen students studying various concentrations at Mansoura University, and one student is also a medical student. Due to not being able to return to Gaza where the students would complete their internships living at home with their families and no cost for internships in Gaza there became an urgent financial need that was not initially planned for. Students have lost family members; parents are no longer working, and no businesses are operating and therefore unable to financially provide for their children.

The call to action will allow students to be fully funded to pay off past due debt incurred for reasons ranging from losing a parent, health conditions of parents, loss of business and economic crisis in Gaza, and the ongoing siege and blockade on Gaza.

◆ SERVICES

- Tuition and Internship Support to Students from Gaza at Mansura University, Egypt.
- Students' internships were paid directly to the Mansura University and the coordinating hospital where students will complete their internships.
- Location: Mansura University, Egypt.

◆ BENEFICIARIES

- 114+ students have received support to continue their education and internship in Egypt.
- In addition, ZFA has supported one Gaza refugee woman and her children (6 members) in Egypt.

◆ IMPACT

ZFA supports students at Mansoura University, who are unable to return to Gaza for internships due to the crisis. Loss of family members, parental unemployment, and business closures have left them vulnerable.

◆ LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS/ CHALLENGES

In September 2024, ZFA hosted a group of students who were in the USA on a medical observer ship visit.

The students were extremely grateful for the warm welcome and said they didn't realize how big the Zakat Foundation is and were amazed at the Muslim representation from around the world that was present.

Türkiye Orphan Mothers and Orphans Education Support

◆ PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

This project provides Syrian and other conflict-affected youth with access to high-quality higher education, specializing in scientific fields, fostering research skills, critical thinking, and independent analysis, to empower them in community development and service improvement despite war and crisis.

◆ SERVICES

- 40 widowed women per term completed vocational training in tailoring and other trades.
- 200 orphaned children received supplementary education in Turkish, English, and core subjects.
- Widowed women produced clothing in the stitching workshop.
- Regular social activities were organized for orphaned children.
- Comprehensive monitoring and evaluation with periodic reports to track progress.

BENEFICIARIES

480 Since July 2024

IMPACT

- Enhanced employability and economic independence for widowed women.
- Ensured orphaned children kept pace with academic peers.
- Generated income for widowed women to support their families and contribute to the center's operational costs.
- Improved social skills and community integration for orphaned children.
- Ensured transparency and accountability through regular reporting.

Health & Well-Being Program



Jordan Cancer Treatment Sponsorship King Hussein Hospital (Iraqi, Syrian and Palestinian Refugees)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

In 2023, Jordan, hosting 3.8 million refugees, ranked fifth globally in refugee count. With 8,400 new cancer cases annually, including 2,800 non-Jordanian patients, cancer remained the second leading cause of death. Many refugee patients lacked access to treatment, as advanced cancer care was unavailable in their home countries.

To address this urgent need, KHCF requested funding from the Zakat Foundation of America to ensure treatment for critically ill cancer patients.

◆ SERVICES

- Cancer patients received treatment:
 - Leukemia Patients
 - Breast Cancer Patients
 - Brain Cancer Patient
- Target: Refugee Cancer Patients
- Location: KHCF, Queen Rania Al Abdullah Street, Amman - Jordan

◆ BENEFICIARIES

13 (8 Syrian refugees, 4 Gaza Refugees, 1 from Iraq).

◆ IMPACT

Through the Zakat Foundation of America grant, 13 refugee cancer patients from Iraq, Syria, and Palestine/Gaza received life-saving treatment.

Key Impacts:

- All 13 patients (including pediatric and adult cases) received treatment and responded well.
- Costs for chemotherapy, radiotherapy, imaging, and evaluations were fully covered, removing financial barriers.
- Patients were selected based on medical urgency and financial need, ensuring fair and inclusive treatment.
- The program eased the financial burden on KHCF and strengthened Jordan's healthcare system.
- Zakat Foundation's support directly saved lives, offering hope and essential medical care to displaced patients.

This initiative provided urgent cancer treatment to underserved patients, ensuring equity, dignity, and survival.

Health Tent for Sudanese Refugees in Chad (New Project – April 2025)

◆ PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

The Health Tent project is initiated to address the urgent medical needs of Sudanese refugees living in Adré Refugee Camp on the Chad-Sudan border. The camp hosts thousands of refugees fleeing conflict, many of whom arrive with acute or chronic health conditions. Existing clinic services are overstretched, with limited staff, insufficient medicine, and inadequate emergency care systems. This project aims to expand medical services by reinforcing the current infrastructure, recruiting qualified health professionals, and establishing a consistent supply of essential medications to ensure timely and quality healthcare access.

SERVICES (PLANNED)

- 3,200 beneficiaries expected in 12 months.
- Direct Beneficiaries: Up to 15,000 refugees living in Adré Camp, with a focus on women, children, the elderly, and those with chronic or acute health conditions.
- Indirect Beneficiaries: Approximately 5,000 individuals from the surrounding host community may access services during overflow.
- Priority Groups: Children under 5, pregnant women, elderly patients, and individuals with disabilities.

BENEFICIARIES (PLANNED)

Short-Term Goals:

- Increase clinic capacity from 600 to 1,100 consultations per month.
- Ensure consistent access to critical medicines without stockouts.
- Deliver targeted treatment for diarrhea, malaria, and respiratory infections.

Anticipated Long-Term Impact:

- Improve health resilience among refugee populations.
- Reduce avoidable complications and deaths from treatable conditions.
- Enhance trust and engagement between humanitarian service providers and displaced communities.
- Support stronger collaboration with local health institutions.

IMPACT (PLANNED)

Immediate Outcomes:

- Doubled clinic capacity from 600 to 1,100 consultations/month.
- Medicine availability increased from 60% to full coverage for key conditions.
- Treatment rates of 85% for diarrhea, 90% for malaria, and 75% for respiratory infections.

Long-Term Impact:

- Strengthened health resilience among refugees.
- Reduced preventable complications and deaths.
- Optimized local health system through better workflows and referral coordination.
- Community trust built through consistent, culturally sensitive service delivery.

LESSONS LEARNED / RECOMMENDATIONS / CHALLENGES

Anticipated Challenges:

- Possible delays in medicine delivery due to poor road conditions, especially in the rainy season.
- Staff turnover may affect service continuity.
- Peak periods (e.g., during outbreaks) may lead to patient overload.
- Power outages could affect data tracking and medicine storage.

Planned Solutions:

- Maintain a 3-month buffer stock for essential medicines.
- Recruit staff with 6-month contracts and offer cross-training.
- Implement triage and prioritization during peak periods.
- Community trust built through consistent, culturally sensitive service delivery.

Use paper-based data systems and install solar charging stations to ensure uninterrupted operations.

Orphan Sponsorship Program



TÜRKİYE

The goal of the program is to support Syrian orphans. Most of the children live in Gaziantep city, and some of the orphans also live in the border cities of Turkey. The goal is to provide stability, security, and opportunities for orphans to thrive despite their circumstances. The program aims to support the holistic development of orphans, enhancing their physical well-being and empowering them mentally and academically through access to quality education. Accordingly, our OSP framework is built around four key pillars: financial, educational, emotional, and social support. During the last 3 years, the program has supported more than 560 orphaned Syrian refugees.

JORDAN

The program aims to support orphans in Jordan, including Palestinian and Syrian refugees, by protecting them from child labor and ensuring their access to education and necessities; food, rent, bills, clothes, school supplies and fees, etc. During the last 3 years, the program has supported more than 170 orphaned Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Jordan.

LEBANON

The program strives to enhance the quality of life for 100 underprivileged orphans in Lebanon, including Palestinian refugees living in different Palestinian refugee camps; Beddawi Camp, Ain al-Hilweh, and Mieh Mieh refugee camp. The primary objective is to alleviate their financial struggles by extending cash assistance throughout the program's duration. Moreover, the project endeavors to create a favorable influence on the lives of these children by facilitating access to educational opportunities, medical care, and essential living provisions. During the last 3 years, the program has supported more than 82 orphaned Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

LIBYA

The program aims to increase the enrollment of orphans, including Sudanese and Chadian orphans in Libya, in community health services, education initiatives, and other essential social programs. Special emphasis on minimizing their school dropout rates through supporting their school fees, uniforms, textbooks, and other essential learning materials. Additionally, fosters a supportive environment that promotes the emotional well-being and social development of orphaned refugees, enhancing their resilience and interpersonal skills. During the last 3 years, the program has supported more than 139 orphaned Sudanese and Chadian refugees in Libya.

PALESTINE

The program aims to support Palestinian orphans in the Gaza Strip—including those living in refugee camps—by addressing their specific needs and providing targeted assistance where it is most needed. Through ongoing sponsorship and food vouchers, the program has the potential to significantly enhance the well-being and quality of life of these vulnerable children. According to the UNRWA, Palestine refugees are defined as “persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict.” During the last 3 years, the program has supported more than 500 orphaned Palestinian refugees who are registered with UNRWA and receive their support and services.



Conclusion

In conclusion, the ZFA's comprehensive suite of programs—including the Refugee Empowerment Projects (REP), Emergency Response Program (ERP), Food Security Programs (FSP), Livelihood Programs (LHP), Education Program (EDP), Health & Well-Being Programs (HWP), and Orphan Sponsorship Program (OSP)—has collectively transformed the lives of nearly 325,000 refugees and displaced individuals between 2022 and 2025.

These initiatives span multiple regions and address diverse needs: REP fosters cultural support, empowerment, and integration across communities in Kenya, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Venezuela, and more; ERP delivers urgent relief in conflict zones such as Sudan, Libya, and Ukraine; FSP ensures nutritional aid through Ramadan food packages and *Udhiya* meat distribution; LHP offers vocational training in Jordan for Syrian and Palestinian refugees; EDP supports education from primary school supplies to higher education scholarships, including medical tuition aid and orphan education; HWP provides critical healthcare services, including cancer treatment sponsorship and health tents for refugees; and OSP offers essential care for orphans in Türkiye, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, and Palestine.

In the U.S., programs like the Rohingya Cultural Center, Afghan Cultural Center Inc., Job Placement & Training for Ukrainian, Afghan, and Venezuelan refugees, and the St. Barts Shelter provide targeted community support, job readiness, and family assistance. Together, these programs exemplify ZFA's commitment to a holistic, culturally informed approach that empowers displaced populations, restores dignity, and fosters resilience worldwide.

ZFA's programs—such as Refugee Empowerment Projects, Emergency Response, Orphan Sponsorship, Food Security, Livelihood, Education, and Health & Well-Being—directly align with this mission by addressing urgent needs and fostering long-term empowerment for vulnerable communities worldwide. Through these efforts, ZFA transforms charitable giving into a sustainable impact that restores dignity and promotes self-reliance.

References

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