

## Skills Development and Livelihood Program

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Is my donation Zakat eligible?

Yes. Just like other HHRD programs, the Skills Development and Livelihood Program is geared toward the poor and needy. We aspire to increase our students' economic situation from those who are eligible to receive zakat to those who pay and give zakat on their own.

#### How do you choose countries to work in?

We have three basic ways we choose countries.

1. Countries in which HHRD already has an established presence. This usually comes through other HHRD programs such as the Orphan Support Program or Water and Sanitation Hygiene.
2. Countries where we have responded to an emergency and HHRD is seeking to establish developmental programs to help residents recover.
3. Countries that are referred to us by local organizations or other countries that we work with.

#### How do you choose the locations of the Skills Development and Livelihood Centers (SDLC)?

Needs assessments are conducted either by HHRD or a local, vetted partner. It is important to locate a center where the target population can attend classes, either in a high traffic area or another place that is accessible for our beneficiaries.

#### How are SDLCs staffed?

We choose instructors that are passionate and dedicated. It is important that they have a track record of success in their field of expertise, as well as the necessary certificates or degrees if applicable. For example, henna does not require a degree, but our instructors must be skilled. Typically they are full time and they work year round.

In addition to the instructors, some classes may have assistants. More commonly, there is one staff member per course. In some locations we also have to hire other staff, for example we might need a security guard to protect the property and the students. In Pakistan, the women say that they feel safe and comfortable at the SDLCs. This is our goal, to make sure that the SDLCs are staffed in such a way that our beneficiaries have no trouble attending and completing their courses.

#### Can I direct my donation to a specific SDLC?

Yes. On our webpage, donors are able to choose the country and donate toward a center in that country, or help donate toward an entrepreneurial startup kit or even sponsor a student.

### **Where does a general donation go to?**

A general donation made to the SDLP will go to the costs associated with running centers, which means teacher salaries, equipment and supplies, tools, and maintenance of the facility.

### **Why are there different courses available in different countries?**

Different economies demand different skills sets. Henna for example, might not fetch much money in some countries, but in other countries, it's quite lucrative. Telephone customer service may not be needed in some economies, whereas in others, it is a good skill to have. The bottom line is that we are trying to bring our students out of poverty by responding to the local market.

### **How does HHRD determine which vocational courses to offer?**

We follow a thorough process to ensure the courses meet the needs and interests of the local community while providing marketable skills. First, we survey potential students in the area to understand their interests and preferences. Then, we conduct research to identify in-demand skills and analyze the job market for those skills. This two-pronged approach allows us to offer courses that align with student interests and have a high potential for employment opportunities.

Additionally, we prioritize vocational training that offers a substantial return on investment. We look for courses that are relatively inexpensive to provide but can significantly increase a graduate's earning potential. For example, if a \$200 course can help a graduate earn an additional \$2,000 per year, that represents an excellent return on our investment in their skills development.

Throughout this process, we rely on input from our in-country program managers, who provide valuable insights into local market conditions, income potential, and other relevant factors.

### **Why does the cost of vocational courses vary across different countries?**

There are several factors that contribute to the difference in course costs from one country to another:

1. **Course Duration:** The length of the vocational training programs can vary significantly. Some courses may last only a couple of months, while others can extend up to a year or more. Naturally, longer courses tend to be more expensive due to the increased duration of instruction, materials, and other associated costs.
2. **Instructor Expertise:** Certain courses may require instructors with highly specialized skills or expertise, which can be more costly to secure. For instance, finding a qualified computer instructor may be more expensive than hiring someone to teach sewing or other more traditional vocational skills.

3. **Economic Conditions:** The overall economic circumstances and cost of living in a particular country play a significant role in determining course costs. In countries with a higher cost of living, such as Jordan, the expenses associated with running a vocational program, including instructor salaries, facility rentals, and materials, tend to be higher. Conversely, in countries like Pakistan, where the cost of living is relatively lower, the program costs are generally more affordable.

### **What do we do after graduation for the students?**

Some of the students go on to start their own business venture and we help them by giving them equipment for their trade. For example, if a student graduates with a certificate in auto mechanics, they may get a toolkit; if they take a baking class, they might get an oven.

We track students for two years to monitor their success in getting a job or starting an enterprise. With this data, we are able to see that many of our students increase their earnings over what they were capable of in the past. We also see a trend where students come together to start an enterprise.

In some cases, HHRD is able to pay graduates to produce craftwork, for example, we contract with SDLP graduates for uniforms, school bags and industrial homes. We offer events where graduates can meet clients and advice that will help them get ahead.

### **Are your programs accredited?**

Every graduate receives a certificate from HHRD saying that they successfully completed the class and attended and did well on the final exam. In many countries, these certificates are certified by the government. We are working on making sure that every center in every country has certification.