



**BRIGHTER FUTURES
FOUNDATION**

ZAKAT DISTRIBUTION AT A GLANCE

2023

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OUR MISSION

At Brighter Futures, we work with local leadership to provide education and critical resources to marginalized Muslim communities across the globe.

From purchasing land, to building schools, to feeding students through our Student Food Sponsorship Program, Brighter Futures works with local leaders to make a sizeable impact for Muslim communities by delivering resources specific to the needs of each community.

OUR VISION

We envision a world where everyone who so desires is able to attain an education – be it Islamic or secular – regardless of their income or geographic location – a world where communities have the essential resources such as food, shelter, and clean water, such that they are able to direct their attention towards educational pursuits.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At Brighter Futures, we recognize that Zakat is a mandate of Allah Ta'ala and amongst the foundational rites of Islam. Hence, we take the utmost care in ensuring that Zakat is distributed in compliance with Islamic dictates.

We believe that Zakat disbursement should be a transparent process. This report aims to give our donors a deeper look into the Zakat program and how their Zakat contributions have been transforming lives.

We ask that Allah Ta'ala accept the Zakat of all the donors, accept our efforts, and protect us all.

JANUARY 2023 - DECEMBER 2023

SUMMARY

\$422,980 USD

TOTAL ZAKAT
DISTRIBUTED

\$177,845

Malawi

\$109,510

Togo

\$57,555

Türkiye Earthquake
Relief

\$50,865

Chad

\$16,285

Zambia

\$10,920

Sierra Leone



\$16,665

Togo

\$13,700

Malawi

\$350

Sierra Leone

\$30,715 USD

TOTAL SADAQAH AL-FITR
DISTRIBUTED



ZAKAT FEATURES

Brighter Futures strives to maximize donors' Zakat through a range of high-impact endeavors in countries across the globe.

Our goal is to distribute Zakat in a way that adheres to the rules of the Shari'ah while helping impact the lives of some of the most marginalized and overlooked members of our Ummah.



HAWAA IDRIS

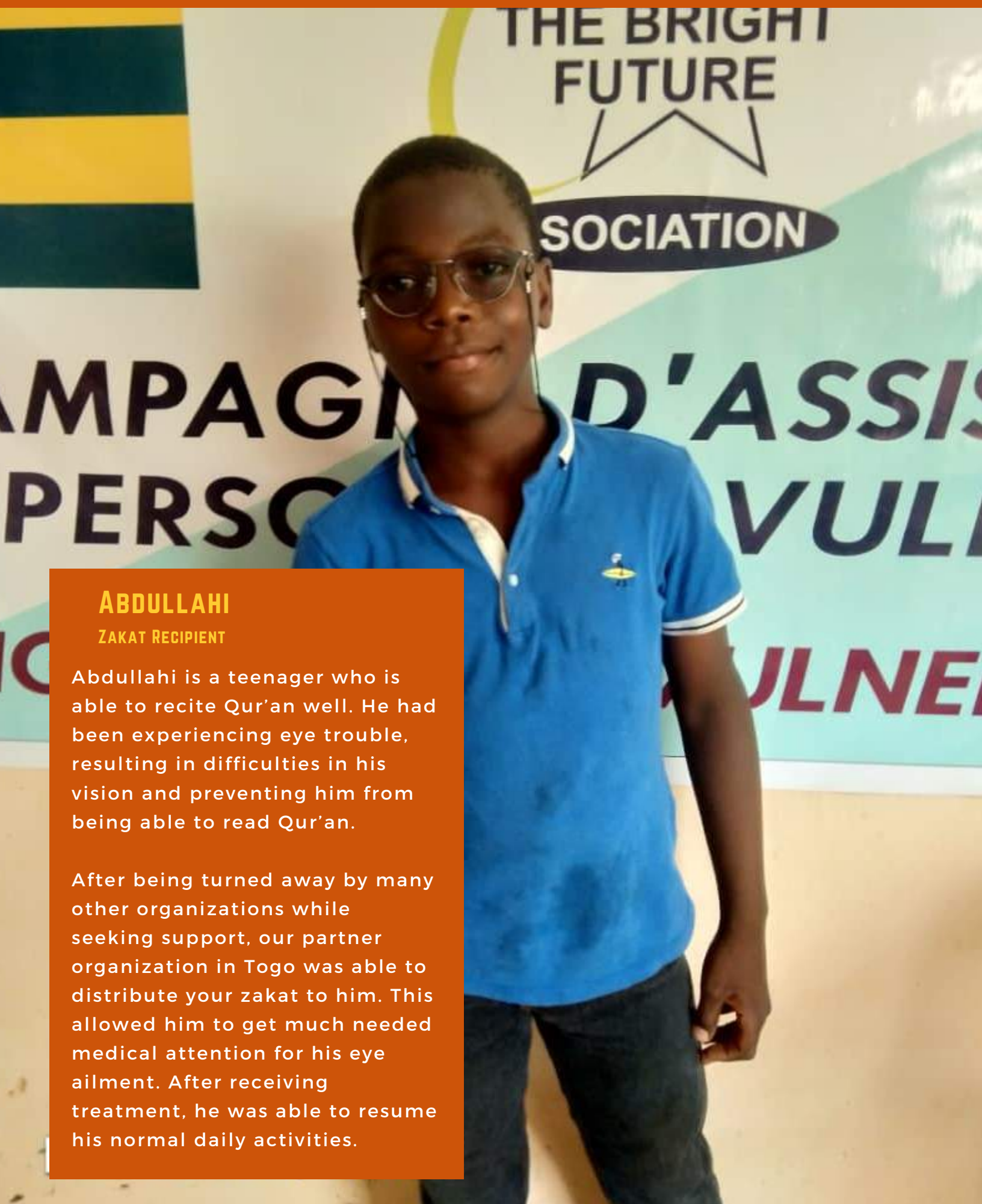
ZAKAT RECIPIENT

Hawaa Idris, an elderly widow who is without any additional family, is receiving zakat aid.

Our partners in Togo describe her as a very pious and devout woman who voluntarily sweeps her local masjid.

Although many other women her age make due by begging on the street, Hawaa used to go into the forest with an ax and chop firewood to sell.

Your zakat helps ensure her needs are met, providing her with both food and cash stipends.



ABDULLAHI

ZAKAT RECIPIENT

Abdullahi is a teenager who is able to recite Qur'an well. He had been experiencing eye trouble, resulting in difficulties in his vision and preventing him from being able to read Qur'an.

After being turned away by many other organizations while seeking support, our partner organization in Togo was able to distribute your zakat to him. This allowed him to get much needed medical attention for his eye ailment. After receiving treatment, he was able to resume his normal daily activities.



SULAIMAN

ZAKAT RECIPIENT

Sulaiman woke up one day with immense pain and swelling in one of his legs from a suspected snake bite. Due to his pain and impact to his mobility, Sulaiman was unable to continue taking up the jobs through which he would sustain himself and his family.

Without any work, Sulaiman was unable to get the medical attention he needed, and his family was also struggling without any income. Through Zakat, Sulaiman was able to get the required medical care, and his family was also supported during the brunt of his recovery to ensure their basic needs were met.



ABU ABDURRAOOF

ZAKAT RECIPIENT

Abu AbdurRaof (right) is an elder in Togo who regularly looks for work opportunities, but he is unable to find a stable source of income, leaving him and his family without basic needs.

Through the Zakat he receives, Abu AbdurRaof is able to send his children to school, something he hopes will provide them with a more stable future as they grow.

COMBATING FOOD INSECURITY



Brighter Futures Widow Support Program

Our partners in Togo ensure that widows within the community are supported through the Zakat program. Recipients receive Zakat in the form of both food and cash stipends, depending on their needs. Many of these widows depend on the organization to help provide their basic necessities.



Ramadan Food Baskets

In Malawi and Togo, a portion of Zakat was used to provide food baskets in some of the area's poorest villages. The food baskets were designed to have enough staple foods to provide a family with food for the entire month of Ramadan. Approximately 1,400 families benefited from this program.

ZAKAT FEATURES

TURKIYE EARTHQUAKE

\$57,555

TOTAL ZAKAT DISTRIBUTED



ZAKAT FEATURES

The February 2023 earthquake in Türkiye and Syria was one of the worst natural disasters in history to hit the region, causing thousands of deaths and widespread destruction. Brighter Futures worked with local leadership to distribute Zakat in the form of food baskets (pictured) and cash stipends to those affected.

Members of the Brighter Futures team traveled to Türkiye in Ramadan 2023 to assist in the relief efforts and oversee part of the Zakat distribution.



ZAKAT FEATURES

CYCLONE FREDDY MALAWI

\$142,110

TOTAL ZAKAT DISTRIBUTED



ZAKAT FEATURES

Cyclone Freddy hit Malawi in February 2023, dropping more than six months worth of rain in just six days, causing widespread flooding, landslides, loss of property, and hundreds of deaths.

In the immediate aftermath of the storm, Brighter Futures sent \$19,455 of Zakat. An additional \$122,655 was sent in the months following. In fact, most of the Zakat distributions in Malawi this year targeted areas which were heavily impacted by the storm and were struggling to recover.

Zakat was distributed in form of food packs and cash stipends, depending on the greater need in the affected area.



ZAKAT FEATURES

INCOME GENERATION PILOT PROGRAM

\$18,000

TOTAL ZAKAT DISTRIBUTED

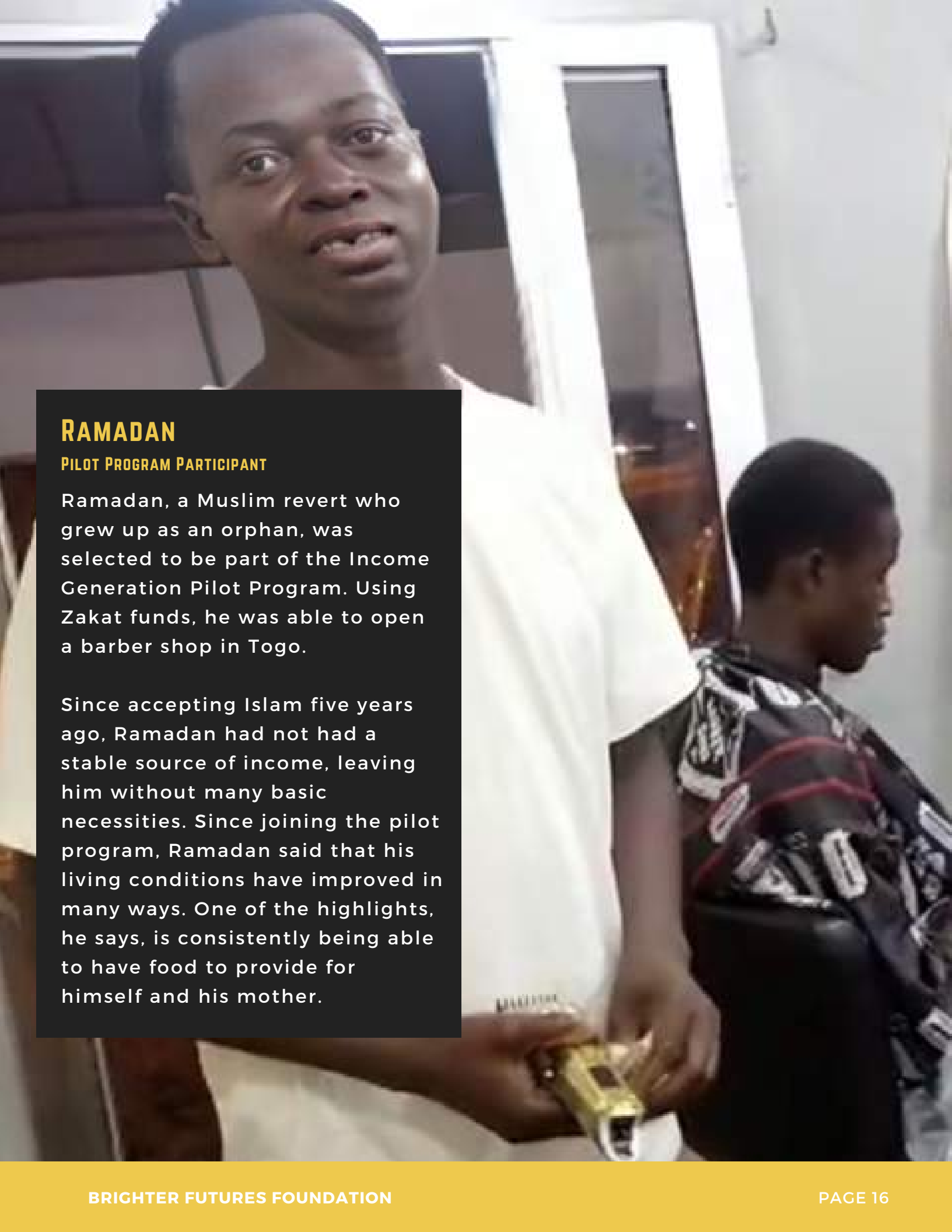


ZAKAT FEATURES

In Ramadan 2023, Brighter Futures began piloting a program in Togo and Chad in which Zakat funds were used to provide recipients with a commodity which could then be leveraged as a source of income. Examples include providing motorbikes to be used as a taxi service and providing sales containers to be used as a store front. Sewing machines were distributed. Tamlik was achieved by the in-kind donation provided, and Zakat donations were only used from donors who specifically requested to be part of the pilot program.

Through this program which we hope to expand in 2024, we aim to provide recipients with stable sources of income such that their individual and family needs are met without having to rely on Zakat.





RAMADAN

PILOT PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

Ramadan, a Muslim revert who grew up as an orphan, was selected to be part of the Income Generation Pilot Program. Using Zakat funds, he was able to open a barber shop in Togo.

Since accepting Islam five years ago, Ramadan had not had a stable source of income, leaving him without many basic necessities. Since joining the pilot program, Ramadan said that his living conditions have improved in many ways. One of the highlights, he says, is consistently being able to have food to provide for himself and his mother.



RUQAYYAH

PILOT PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

Ruqayyah is a young mother who was struggling to provide for her children. She was unable to consistently have food at home, and she was unable to afford food services for her children at their school.

Ruqayyah was given a sales container through the pilot program, and she converted it into a store. Now, through the earnings of this store, Ruqayyah says that she and her kids are able to eat consistently at home, and she has enough money to avail additional services at her kids' school.

ZAKAT POLICY

OUR ZAKAT POLICY IN A NUTSHELL

Zakāt is given for the purpose of providing for indigent Muslims who possess less than *niṣāb*, transferring to them full ownership of the wealth. *Niṣāb* is the minimum amount of wealth a Muslim must have to be eligible to accept Zakāt.

USE OF ZAKAT FUNDS ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES

At Brighter Futures, we maintain a policy of avoiding *hīlahs* (legal loopholes) in our zakat programs. We strive to ensure that the poor are the first and final recipients of Zakāt, not as a means to any other end, regardless of however noble it may be.

We ensure that *tamlīk* (transfer of ownership) takes place in all of our zakat distributions. Zakat is not used for construction, digging wells, or any other infrastructural project. This is due to the fact that in such projects, the recipient(s) cannot take physical possession of the item and thus does not gain ownership.

Additionally, Zakat is not used for any of the operational costs associated with our schools or *makaatib*. As such, Zakat is not used to pay rent, electricity bills, water bills, purchase equipment, cover student tuitions, or any other operational costs. Furthermore, though students in our Togo school are Zakat eligible, we do not use Zakat funds for their daily meals, as *tamlīk* does not take place when food is served.

Zakat is distributed to teachers at the schools we support who meet the criteria of Zakat eligibility, but their zakat is not disbursed as compensation or a payment contingent upon their work as a teacher.

Zakat eligibility assessments are performed by our partner organizations to ensure only eligible teachers are receiving Zakat.



USE OF ZAKAT FUNDS

SHAR'I POSITIONS

Zakat collected is exclusively given to Muslim recipients. We uphold the mainstream position that the Zakat category “المؤلفة قلوبهم” either refers exclusively to Muslims or is simply no longer applicable. It cannot be used as a premise to distribute Zakat to non-Muslims.

We uphold the mainstream position of Muslim scholars that “في سبيل الله” - those in the path of Allah - cannot be taken to be all-inclusive. Zakat must be given to indigent Muslims who meet the criterion of eligibility. Furthermore, they must be made owners of the wealth. Zakat money is not used for any other purpose under the pretense of “في سبيل الله”.

We uphold the widely-accepted view that zakat can also be distributed in-kind, provided that tamleek (transfer of ownership) takes place. (Fatawa Darul Uloom Zakariyya, Ahsan al-Fatawa).

At Brighter Futures, we do not use any of the zakat funds to cover administrative costs. We hold that the Qur'anic designation *والعاملين عليها* specifically refers to officially appointed Zakat collectors operating under an Islāmic government, not mere agents who facilitate distribution of Zakāt.

Our administrative expenses are funded privately by donors who contribute specifically to our administrative expenses. No portion is taken out of charitable contributions for administrative costs.

Alḥamdulillah, Brighter Futures upholds a 100% donation policy for all our donations. (There is a third-party credit card processing fee with donations through the website. Online zakat donors are encouraged to cover the fee to ensure the full Zakat amount reaches Brighter Futures. Alternatively, donors can send Zakat through Zelle to avoid the credit card processing fees).



A NOTE ON LOCAL DISTRIBUTION OF ZAKAT

We recognize that some scholars have encouraged that Zakāt be given locally, based on the hadith recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim:

تُؤَخَذُ مِنْ أَغْنِيَائِهِمْ فَتَرَدُّ فِي فُقَرَائِهِمْ

“Zakāt should be taken from their wealthy and given to their poor”

Therefore, we encourage Muslims to give their Zakāt wherever they feel comfortable, including discharging it locally, if they prefer.

However, considering the gaping inequalities within the current global economic system, we also recognize that if everyone were to dispense their Zakāt locally, wealthy countries would be over-compensated, and impoverished countries would be completely deprived.

For this reason, the opportunity to dispense one’s Zakāt internationally and thereby financially assist indigent Muslims in these impoverished regions remains an option for those who so desire.





INTEGRITY OF ZAKAT DISTRIBUTION

To ensure the integrity of our zakat program and assure its conformity to the guidelines stipulated by the Sharī'ah, we ensure that every step of the process is overseen by 'ulama. The collection of funds is overseen by Mawlānā Yousuf Ghouse in the United States and its distribution is overseen by 'ulama amongst Brighter Futures' organizational partners, Mawlānā Ibrahim Moufti in Togo, Mawlana Al-Amin Sulaiman in Chad, Mawlānā Siraj Umar in Malawi, Mawlānā Musa Mazuda in Zambia, and Shaykh Ibrahim Shaw in Sierra Leone.

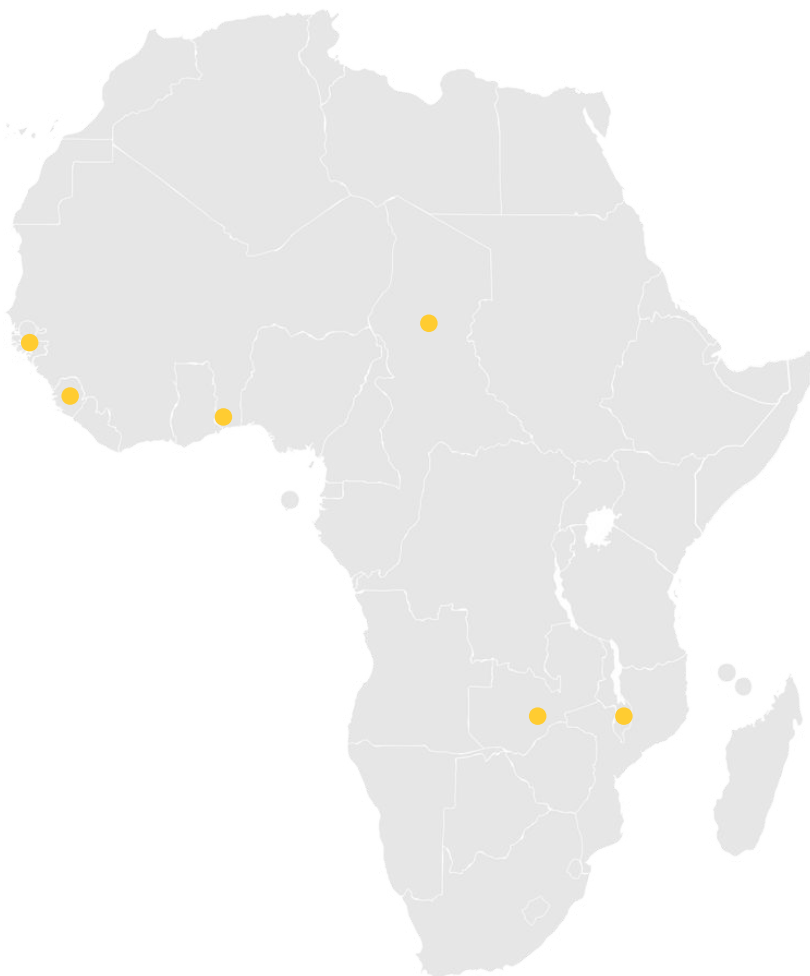
Brighter Futures also requires receipts to be provided for the Zakāt funds transferred, and Brighter Futures receives updates from its partners prior to and following Zakāt distributions.

2024

ZAKAT GOALS

This year, we are focusing on targeted distribution in each of our recipient countries.

Our goals are to continue to run some of the existing Brighter Futures projects and to continue to support the surrounding communities in our partner countries.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

\$250,000

Zakat provided in either cash stipends or food baskets. Our goal is to have at least 5,000 recipients this year

TEACHER SPONSORSHIPS

\$95,000

Zakat to provide the salaries for 23 full-time teachers and 4 part-time teachers,

ORPHAN SPONSORSHIP

\$50,000

Cover the school and madrasa fees for 26 orphans in Zambia

INCOME GENERATION

\$30,000

Provide at least 20 recipients with an source of income generation

ZAKAT PROJECTS

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

INCOME GENERATION

This year, we plan to grow the Income Generation Zakat Program. Recipients will continue to be monitored to assess the efficacy of the program, but we plan to expand it to more recipients, inshaAllah. We hope to allow these individuals to begin earning for themselves and outgrow dependency on zakat.



MOTORCYCLE RICKSHAW
COST: \$2500



SEWING MACHINE
COST: \$400



BARBER SHOP
COST: \$1500



SALES CONTAINER
COST: \$1000

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

With several of our projects nearing completion and even more just getting started, there is no better time to support Brighter Futures as we continue to make an impact across the globe.

DONATE YOUR ZAKAT THROUGH OUR 100% DONATION POLICY

100% of our donations are used directly for the programs we support. We do not use any of our program donations for the staff or administrative costs.

ZELLE

info @ brighterfuturesusa.org

OR

DONATE ONLINE

 brighterfuturesusa.org/donate

CONNECT US WITH YOUR LOCAL MASJID

Brighter Futures partnered with a number of masajid across the US over the past year, particularly for the distribution of Zakat and Sadaqah al-Fitr. Help connect us with your local masjid for Sharia'ah-compliant Zakat and Sadaqah al-Fitr distribution to some of the Ummah's most deserving recipients.





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