

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation, an Organization by the People for the People

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Abstract

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation (IKRF) was officially established on March 5th 1979, to aid the underprivileged, alleviate poverty and improve the self sufficiency of the needy people. The Foundation, funded mainly by people's contributions, has implemented several plans to preserve human benevolence, assist the needy people, meet their essential needs and solve their cultural and economic problems. Its services for the improvement of the lives of the needy people including providing food, clothes, housing, health care, insurance, education and employment are not limited to borders and have been extended to other countries.

Keywords: *Alleviate poverty, Needy people, Iran*

Introduction

Activities and services of IKRF go back to the year 1963. A few years later and following the victory of the Islamic revolution, supporting the needy people became the first priority of IKRF programs. IKRF was officially established on March 5th 1979 (22 d after the victory of the Islamic revolution), Following the issuance of a decree by the late, great Imam Khomeini (P.B.U. H.) (1).

The main objectives of IKRF include: creating grounds for cultural growth and self sufficiency of underprivileged people; their access to the facilities of society and solving their cultural and economic problems; supporting needy people and satisfying their essential needs; preserving human benevolence and reinforcing social solidarity; realizing social participations and improving self sufficiency of underprivileged people; institutionalizing the culture of donation and sacrifice within the society; and ameliorating social relations of underprivileged people (2).

The 20 yr vision of IKRF, which is based on I.R.Iran constitution, is being executed in four 5 yr plans (3). Supporting the deprived and alleviating poverty; empowering the needy people; reinforcing and expanding the scientific and research activities; attracting people's con-

tributions; and international services are among the major policies of the fourth 5 yr plan of IKRF (4).

The main financial resources of IKRF are provided through people's contributions and religious payments including alms.

The plans, activities and services of IKRF covers the whole span of life even before birth and after death such as: Relief Seeking Plan, which supports the underprivileged especially orphans financially and spiritually; Shahid Rajaei Plan, which helps rural people over 60 and their families; Family Support Plan, which takes care of the families of imprisoned people; Ikram Plan, which supports orphans; Development Program, which provides housing for help seekers; Self Sufficiency Plan, which creates jobs for needy people; and Repatriation Plan, which assists immigrants to go back to their birthplaces. The Foundation, moreover, provides medical insurance, educational and cultural services for the underprivileged and needy people. It also gives no-interest loans, financial help and dowry to the newly married needy couples (1, 2).

By the end of 2008, a total of 8.6 million needy people have received aid from IKRF; Shahid Rajaei Plan has covered approximately 698.000 families with population of 1.56 million people; Over 32.000 families with population of 96.000

people from the families of imprisoned people were brought under Family Support Plan; IKRF has insured 1.5 million from the needy people of the society; More than 843.000 students have also received assistance from IKRF (2, 5, 6).

The extent of IKRF activities and services has extended to other countries. The Foundation, apart from the race, religion and nationality strives to help the needy and underprivileged people overseas (1).

Conclusion

All of the services offered by IKRF, from financial aid to support students, from providing dowries for the newly married needy couples, from setting up schools and other educational facilities, from financial aid for women to self-sufficiency programs, are just some of the IKRF range of activities. The IKRF helps those in need not just in the large urban centers of the country, but also particularly in the most deprived areas. In addition to working within the country and helping those who are in need, the IKRF is also active abroad by passing on its own experiences and other contributions in the form of financial and material aid. It is clear

that this organization is the one that is striving for the betterment of the lives of those in need in Iran and overseas. To put it in better words, IKRF is an organization for the people, supported by the people.

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