



PROGRAM NAME: DIASPORA DIGITAL BRIDGES (DDB)
IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION: ALIGNING CULTURES
PROGRAM LIFESPAN: JANUARY 2ND – DECEMBER 31ST, 2026

Program Summary:

DDB witnesses a new partnership between **Aligning Cultures** and the **Iraqi Home Foundation for Creativity**, a pioneer organization that helps embrace and shelter orphans and homeless children. The goal of the **Iraqi Home Foundation for Creativity** is to provide shelter, education, emotional support and rehabilitation to help orphaned Iraqi children heal from the trauma by, while **Aligning Cultures** seeks to build resilient communalities through transformative partnerships. The Iraqi diaspora didn't have any structured bonds with their home, and for decades all the support to Iraqi vulnerable communities was made based on individual effort. DDB provides a structured and hands-on bridge connecting the diaspora expertise and support to their home.

Program Objective:

DDB aims to empower orphans through digital skills and self-reliance, while simultaneously fostering a strong, engaged connection with the Iraqi diaspora community. Focus on impact sourcing models, which connect marginalized youth directly to digital work.

Phase 1: Foundation and Digital Hub

- **Activity 1:** Establish "Digital Opportunity Center" (DOC):
 - **Activity 1.1:** Set up a dedicated tech center in the Iraqi Home Foundation for Creativity.
 - **Activity 1.2:** Diaspora-led fundraising provides hardware (refurbished laptops, tablets, reliable internet, backup power/solar solutions).
 - **Activity 1.3:** Diaspora Tech Volunteers can remotely advise on setup, network security, and necessary software.
 - **Activity 1.4:** Curriculum Development: Diaspora professionals (e.g., software developers, marketers, graphic designers) partner with local professionals to design a curriculum focused on in-demand digital economy skills (e.g., coding, data entry, social media marketing, basic web design, virtual assistant skills, digital literacy, and financial literacy).

Phase 2: Training and Mentorship Connection

- **Activity 2: "Skills for Self-Reliance" Training Tracks:**
 - **Activity 2.1:** Digital Literacy, basic computer skills, internet safety, email, and communication tools.
 - **Activity 2.2:** Digital Fundamentals, graphic design (using free tools like Canva), basic coding (HTML/CSS), data management (Excel/Google Sheets).
 - **Activity 2.3:** Digital Economy Specialization, freelance Platform Training (Upwork, Fiverr), e-commerce setup, virtual assistance, advanced technical skills (e.g., specific programming languages).
 - **Activity 2.4:** The Diaspora Mentorship Network, create a structured, secure online platform to pair orphans (Mentees) with diaspora professionals (Mentors).
 - **Activity 2.5:** Focus Areas for Mentorship, career guidance, soft skills (communication, professionalism), portfolio review, and cultural bridge-building.
 - **Activity 2.6:** Schedule regular virtual check-ins (with local staff supervision).

Phase 3: Earning and Enterprise Support

- **Activity 3: Micro-Task and Freelance Teams**
 - **Activity 3.1:** Help the trained orphans form cooperative digital work teams. Diaspora organizations and businesses can serve as the first clients, outsourcing small, manageable digital tasks (e.g., data cleaning, content moderation, website testing). This provides early experience and builds a professional portfolio.
 - **Activity 3.2:** Financial Inclusion and E-Banking: Provide training and support to help the youth set up secure digital bank accounts or payment wallets (like PayPal or local mobile money).
 - **Activity 3.3:** Diaspora financial experts can offer workshops on budgeting, saving, and reinvesting earnings.

Program Sustainability and Connection

- **Diaspora Skill-Transfer Visits:**
 - Organize short-term visits where diaspora members (professionals, educators) travel to the home country to run intensive bootcamps or "Hackathons."
 - This builds deeper relationships and transfers high-level skills in person.

- **Alumni Network:**
 - Once a youth graduates and finds work, they join the Diaspora Digital Bridges Alumni Network.
 - They can then become peer mentors for new cohorts, creating a self-sustaining cycle of support.

- **Diaspora Investment Fund:**
 - Establish a micro-grant or seed fund, managed by the diaspora, to
 - Help alumni launch their own small digital businesses (e.g., a local social media marketing agency).
 - Help alumni start apprenticeships in designated digital companies in Iraq.

Key Connection Points for the Diaspora:

Role	Contribution	Connection Mechanism
Financial Supporters/ Diaspora Board Member	Funding for hardware, internet, salaries for apprentices, and new startups.	Dedicated personal donations and/or online fundraising campaigns, corporate matching.
Technical Experts	Curriculum design, advanced training, IT support.	Remote consulting, intensive virtual workshops.
Mentors	Career guidance, soft skills, cultural exchange	Structured, secure one-on-one video calls.
First Clients	Outsourcing micro-tasks to the youth teams.	Business-to-program partnership agreements.