



Building Our Communities

December, 2018

A click from Hameeda's Collection

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Hameeda's husband quit drugs because of her

Ms. Hameeda, a mother of 5 children, struggled through the hardships of helping her drug addict husband to recover, and to support her kids to live a better life. Hameeda's life upended when she got married. Her husband would spend all of the home savings on buying drugs. She didn't have enough money to afford meals let alone providing her children health care and an education. In 2014, when Hameeda started her journey with Zardozi, her first aim was to admit her husband to a rehabilitation center and cure his drug addiction.

"The only work that caught my eyes was tailoring. I thought I could excel my skills in this business area better. So I took some training and started to sew clothes for my neighbors and then slowly selling the clothes to near villages as well. I also received good orders from different shops with profitable prices," says Hameeda.

Looking at her business experiences, profitability and operations method, Hameeda took the risk to do some investment. She bought readymade cloths and sold them to her relatives and villagers. She was surprised at making her life's biggest amount of money on her own.

Hameeda also started to practice business the old way- exchanging clothes with goods. She says, "A lot of our people are poor; they could not afford my dresses. One day a friend asked me if she could exchange a dress for some fruits. This gave me an idea of selling my clothes both for cash and goods." Bartering in her small village kept Hameeda's business on track.

While telling us her story, Hameeda mentioned that one of the biggest achievements of her life was helping her drug addict husband to get well and stand firm beside her. Hameeda's husband said, "I regret my bad habits, but now I want to make up for it. I help Hameeda in selling cereals, dried fruits and Qurot. Together we make very good profit from both sewing clothes and selling foodstuff which we get through bartering."

Zardozi Volunteer Members helped Ali Chopan people to have asphalted roads



Rough streets under the process of construction

This winter, the Kadars, our volunteer members, have given us another opportunity to appreciate their work. They have once again helped their community to solve problems which otherwise would have been difficult without an influential person's support and a collective effort of the village women.

Recently, in a far-fetched district of Mazara-e-Sharif, a group of women discussed some of the difficulties they face in their society. They complained about damaged streets in one of the Manbeh meetings. These meetings are usually used for problem solving sessions as well. The rough and bumpy streets in the Ali Chopan District of Mazar-e-Sharif had made public transportation difficult during the winter season.

The local people have lived with this problem for two winters but there has not been any government attention. The issue was finally brought up by the male leaders of the community. In order to accelerate the process, the men suggested channeling this issue through their women to Zardozi Volunteer Members. "The local people trust that we can do something, therefore they bring most of their problems to us," said one of the Kadars.

Fatima, a beneficiary of Zardozi programs said, "Kadars provided literacy classes to us. They also spoke with the government to construct the main road and build a clinic for us. We were sure they will be able to help us again."

With the right network and expertise, Kadars brought up this issue to Citizen Charter in Mazar-e-Sharif. The Citizen Charter agreed to cover the cost by 70% and asked for 30% contribution from the people, which meant 10,000 AFN per each house. Because the poverty rate was high among the community members, they could not pay all at once.

They proposed the possibility of four installments over an agreed period of time. The Kadars went to the Citizen Charter with the proposal and they have started the road construction based on the agreement. Today, 50% of the job has been completed while 50% more will be constructed in the start of spring.

Mohammad Saleem, who is a resident of Ali Chopan, gave thanks to the Kadars. He acknowledged their services for the society and showed complete support for Zardozi's work in the district.



A click of main road constructed by support of Kadars

Who are Kadars?

- Kadars are Zardozi's volunteer members who perform as Communication Bridge between Zardozi and Nisfe-Jahan's offices.
- They are involved in the implementation of Zardozi's programs, services and activities in the four regions.
- Zardozi provide several capacity building trainings including business administration to the Kadars in order to prepare them to become the building blocks of their societies and help community members particularly women to engage in civic activities.
- Currently Zardozi has four to five Volunteer Members in each region it operates.

About Zardozi

ZARDOZI is a local non-government and non-profit organization aiming to provide economic and social services to around 6,000 Afghan women in four provinces such as Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad and Kapisa with its main office in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Zardozi's objective is to support and empower Afghan women living in the urban and rural areas through its business skills development programs to engage them in the market economy. To achieve this goal, Zardozi has established NisfeJahan as an independent membership-based civil society organization which also runs local Community Business Center where women gather to receive business startup loans; and technical, advisory, business and marketing skills trainings.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please contact:

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Zardozi – Markets for Afghan Artisans
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The logo for the Government of Canada, featuring the word "Canada" in a large, black, serif font. A small red maple leaf is positioned above the letter 'a'.

Zardozi's program of Economic and Social Empowerment for Afghan Women is undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through Global Affairs Canada