



Zardozi Newsletter

February, 2018

Zardozi celebrated Women's Day with gifts, flowers and joys

Zardozi Celebrates Women's Day

"Stand up, stand out, stand together!" From the early 1900's until now, the international women's movement has gained momentum. Thousands of women in unison, including the recent watershed movements of "Me Too" and "Man Etiraz Darum (I Object)" in Afghanistan, these women stood together to fight against the unjust and social constructed norms. They have broken their silence about violence, sexual harassments and inequalities. Every day is said to be women's day, but March 8th is the day to honor all the women who have inspired, worked hard, and survived through everyday violence.

On the 8th of March, Zardozi Kabul main office as well as regional offices celebrated women's day by acknowledging the hard work of its female staff and clients who have made the courage to come out, be recognized, and liberate themselves from suppression. The women's day not only marked the value of women but reminded them that rights are not given but taken. Their fight is essential and will continue, being a mentor for other women as they take a stand for their rights. They will never be forgotten.

Executive Director, Homa Usmany, acknowledged the vital role of women in society and family and emphasized to the women, "Don't wait for the next March! Remind yourselves every day, and every hour that you do a lot and you are the core contributor to the success of your families. Have the courage to break the cage. The month of March is an opportunity to honor our existence and appreciate ourselves. It is the day to remember all of the unsung heroines: the mothers, the sisters, and the wives."

Following Homa Usmany's speech, Zardozi Kabul Regional Office Manager, Engineer Atta Muhammad also expressed his gratitude to the blissful existence of women and said, "It is not only women's day but also men's day, because all men should be standing in support of women and recognizing their role in family, society and offices."

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President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani
Acknowledges Zardozi



Afghanistan President Dr. Ashraf Ghani in the First National Conference of NGOs foremost appreciated and paid tribute to Zardozi's continuous services and the establishment of Nesfe Jahan Association for women's economic empowerment in Afghanistan.

President Ghani in his speech said that, "When the foreign aid was cut off to Zardozi, it did not stop its work but extended it further to support the women in need." He also added that, "Women who had never stepped outside their houses are making important contributions to the economy of their country today."

To be mentioned, it is not the first time Zardozi's services are receiving valuable recognition but the organization was also invited by Ms. Rula Ghani, the First Lady of Afghanistan to her office and

Zardozi Jalalabad Regional Office celebrated this special day together with Nangarhar Women Affairs Directorate, Governor House, along with other NGOs working for women. This also includes its female employees and Kadars in its regional office. Zardozi Nangarhar clients acknowledged women’s day by showcasing their products and selling homemade and pickled food for the program guests. This was much appreciated by the Nangarhar governor and other participants of the event. The governor of Nangarhar said that women’s work has been invisible and not recognized. He stated that women make great contributions to the economy of Afghanistan, especially with presenting Afghan products to markets.

Zardozi’s staff, including male colleagues, is fortunate to serve all these wonderful women and celebrate their existence. Zardozi’s staff in Afghanistan works day and night so that women can be economically independent and put a full stop to poverty which have led many families to violence.



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Zardozi celebrated Women’s Day in coordination with Jalalabad DoWA

Aziza – Nisfe Jahan’s Chairperson



Aziza from Mazar Sharif is the current chairperson of Nisfe Jahan. Getting this position was a dream job for her when she first joined Zardozi. Aziza is a professional tailor and wise business woman who knows how to manage to be both Nisfe Jahan’s chairperson and run her own business at same time. Aziza’s progress has inspired many Zardozi clients to strive for top positions and have a prosperous life. Aziza tells us about her life, her failures and successes. Like other women in Afghanistan, a life of misery brought her to Zardozi’s doorstep. Aziza came with hopes of changing her life.

Aziza helps her trainee at her tailoring shop

When she joined Zardozi, she was able to learn about tailoring through her trainers whom she describes to be patient and kind while training her. After a year and half, Aziza opened a tailoring workshop in her village. Another woman in Aziza's village also started a tailoring shop, but had the upper hand, purchasing three manual tailoring machines and hiring six other women. When Aziza realized that her business was facing failure due to few orders in a small, poor and less industrialized community, she decided to move to Mazar Sharif's capital city where she could find good costumers. After she moved, she received many orders for school uniforms and several other orders from companies. She was introduced to more shops and markets by the help of Zardozi. Aziza also started to attend exhibitions which expanded her networks and reputation.

Seeing a rapid success in her business, Aziza balanced running a tailoring workshop at home, as well as renting a shop in Zulal market. She started getting orders for party and wedding dresses. There are always ups and downs in the business arena, and Aziza came face to face with some challenges that forced her to take her business to the next level. Unable to meet modern day demands for clothes choice and designing, Aziza partnered with a well-known and more experienced male tailor. She also added more advanced tailoring machines and equipment in the shop.

Aziza says that she is proud of herself. Her family appreciates her problem solving skills along with the strong commitment she has to her work.

She also says that even though she has joined up with a male partner who has more experience, she does not undermine her current skills. Each person brings their skills to the business, each learning from the other. We interviewed Saleem, one of the shopkeepers who has put in a clothing order with Aziza . He says, "Aziza is a respectful woman; her products are high quality and meeting today's youngsters demands. That is why most of the shopkeepers come to her for clothes designs."

Aziza says, "It is difficult running a business sometimes and one should be ready for the challenges and risks.

I have learned a lot through the process and Zardozi has made me capable of solving problems through its management, leadership, and communication trainings."

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 Nisfe Jahan 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

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Canada

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