



Inspiring
women who
went from
nothing to
something!
September, 2019

Zardozi participated in Passage to Prosperity Central Asia in Kazakhstan

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Our House-Producers adding spice to fashion World

They may know Afghans by the name of good fighters but looking deep into the country's culture and heritage, beauty and uniqueness defines who we really are through the way we dress. Afghan handmade embroidery and designs are creating a place in people's hearts across the globe.

In the midst of wars and the only image the world has known, uneducated Afghan women at homes and young educated women in cities are challenging the existing perception of the world about their country. They are promoting a sense of fashion that represents the magnificence of the Afghan culture and the colourfulness of its traditional clothing.

Our clothes' designs ornamented with Afghan embroidery and Jewelleries are finding a place in international markets. This is all thanks to the creative nature of the Afghan women who have embedded their handmade embroidery into western and foreign clothing. The country is adding up more colours and ideas to the diversification in fashion.

This is where Zardozi's women are also becoming small contributors to the fashion world. These house producers, majority of who have less or no education and have lost their sons and husbands to the war stitches to earn some money for their families. On the other side, with the help of Zardozi and its quality assurance check, their production riches and adds value to the Afghan clothing style as it gradually exposes to new markets.

Last month, on a journey to Almaty, Kazakhstan, Zardozi women's products were displayed in Passage to Prosperity Central Asia: New Trade Horizons with Afghanistan Trade Show. "Afghan hand embroidery is well-known among neighbour and central Asian countries, but it was a different experience in Kazakhstan. It was new for the people. While most of them admired the texture, others found it expensive" concludes Yalda Azimi, Zardozi's Market Development Manager.

For Zardozi family, it is a new experience to help Afghan women find way to international markets. Our program and marketing team is exploring new places to learn about new fashion, people's preferences, affordability and culture around the world. Frozan who is one of our outspoken clients believes that this country offers so much more than war. "That's what we are proving to the world while generating an income for our families," she adds.

Roqia finds market for her spaghetti production



Ms. Roqia nicely packages the spaghetti which she calls 'Khosha'

They are uneducated but not uncreative. Give an Afghan woman the right support and tools and see what she is capable of. She will give it her all, once she is awakened, and once she has realized her potential and power to transform her life.

With all the women that Zardozi works with, in four different provinces, majority of them are young women and girls who have started to challenge the current status quo and contributes to the economies of their families. They are becoming the bread-winners at their homes and work shoulder by shoulder with their husbands and fathers.

Roqia from a small village of Mazar-e-Sharif is running a small food business. While her husband drives taxi during the day, Roqia is drying and packaging spaghetti with the equipment she had received from another organization who had first introduced her to the idea of producing spaghetti and making a living out of it. Lack of good marketing skills to sell her word and product brought Roqia to Zardozi where she learned the ways and techniques to improve her pre-existing business. Participating in exhibitions organized by Zardozi and attracting more customers is what Roqia says is making her product find a place in the market these days.

Ms. Roqia says that she used to lead a group of 30 women and together produced spaghetti to the market but after a year, the group dissolved and she was not able to make enough money as she could as a group. "Some women left because of family problems while others started to work individually. The reduction in the rate of production distorted my economic situation at home. The moment my neighbours spoke about the impact of Zardozi on their lives, me and my husband saw this as an opportunity," explained Roqia.

A home that used to have 7,000 Afghanis income per month, Roqia and her husband now together makes \$300 every month to run the 9 members family. Although, \$300 is not a substantial amount of money to cover most of the expenses of a family, for Roqia this is a big achievement since she gained back her confidence and earned the right skills to do better in her business. At the meanwhile, she has also hired 7 more women who work with/for her. This has not only helped her increase her production rate but provide job opportunities for other women as well.

"I am very thankful to God for all its giving. The second person I am grateful to is my husband who is with me in every step of my life and helps me with my business. I am lucky to have all of these opportunities."

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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improve the lives of women.**

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