



PROGRESS UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

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Zardozi Clients taking contract-based orders of facemasks during COVID 19

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How Knowledge and Professionalism changed the scenario for Kubra's business at the rough time of COVID 19

Meet Mrs. Kubra a senior and active client of zardozi, who has been beneficiary of zardozi programs for almost 12 years. Mrs. Kubra proudly has developed a business of handicrafts in Kabul province. It took her a lot of sincere efforts to establish and run her own business with great successes during the last 10 years. She has formally registered her handicraft business with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Afghanistan. Hence, she could be addressed as an effective Afghan businesswoman in the market of handicraft and tailoring business. She has certainly an important role in providing employment opportunities for other Afghan women and in the improvement of public revenue by paying business return taxes.

Kubra like many other Afghan women has faced brute challenges in the early stages of her business, as she was suffering from lack of business management skills and weak communication and marketing strategies. Zardozi training programs had helped her to transform her business idea into a real business. Kubra had shown great talents and interests in networking and business communications, she had improved her leadership and business development skills through active participation in almost all training sessions held by Zardozi's CBC in Kabul.

She is now running her business with excellent leadership skills as she is managing over 65 women in this business, she is helping other women to earn independently and improve their lives. One of the greatest points about Mrs. Kubra is that she always stays connected with the Zardozi marketing team since she could well utilize the business opportunities identified by the marketing team. During the COVID 19 lockdown period, she has got many orders of preparing facemasks for Finka Bank "the client linked through Zardozi marketing team ", gradually, due to high customer satisfaction the Number of orders extended for her facemasks during the last two months.

Kubra is extremely happy for being Zardozi's beneficiary for a long period. She says "I am happy that I could save my business during COVID 19, and I am happier that my business helped other women to stay employed during this difficult time, I know it wasn't possible if I never could reach out to Zardozi". Along with Kubra, all zardozi staffs are happy with their efforts as their joint efforts are creating greater impacts on society.

She has gone through many hard times in her life, she is 50 years old lady who is the mother of 9 children, she passed 3 decades of her life witnessing Afghanistan's civil wars, the war which has affected all aspects of people's life such as family, education, economy, and health. Kubra as a strong mother has remained hopeful and active all the time of her life, she supported her husband and her children with a maximum of her skills and qualities. She has fought for her family's survival while they were immigrated to Pakistan for over 5 years.

She regrets that due to poverty, her older children couldn't go to school, but now she is hopeful for the future of her younger child as she is financially enough capable to support her younger child to go school and have a better future.

This is amazing to see Afghan women are interested and committed to development. They have brought great changes in their personal lives and the economy of the country. Afghan women have proved that they are creative and hopeful in all hard situations, so they deserve more supports and appreciation.

Best to all Afghan Women.

Masuma is managing her business well within the current social norms

Masuma 26 years young women have joined Zardozi's business center in Mazar Sharif in the year 2018, here, you can find out how Masuma, developed her business from basic sewing to advanced tailoring since she joined Zardozi's team. Tailoring is now Masuma's merely occupation and she loves her profession. At the beginning, she might have faced numerous challenges like many other self-employed women in Afghanistan but what is interesting about this lady is she could develop her business too quickly within one year. Her personal efforts and her family has been her greatest motivation and have played a vital role in her success.

Masuma, lost her parents long ago in Afghanistan's civil war and she had to look after her younger brother and sisters as she is the oldest member of her family. Generally, being responsible for the survival of family is the heaviest load on one's shoulder but in specific as a woman, taking this responsibility requires a lot of courage and efforts, it is even harder to pursue on this responsibility in a man dominated and rigid culture in a society like an Afghan society where the old traditions are being practiced. In our society it is too challenging



Masuma with her sisters are Safely working at home in Balkh

for an uneducated woman to find job in today's job market, firstly and secondly even if she finds a job it would be so difficult for young women to keep up the job due to social and cultural norms, (working outside for a woman is not acceptable by many families and communities in Afghanistan). Therefore, women feel more secure and comfortable to undertake home-based jobs rather than working outside the home. However, even Self-employed women in Afghanistan are confronted with many conflicts as they must conform to boundaries and social expectations.

The research by AREU in 2014 has shown tailoring occupation constitutes 25.1% of the total urban market labor participation in Afghanistan, out of which women tailors constitutes 68% of the whole tailors' community.

Masuma used to think it is impossible to earn sufficient money through working from home, so she was seeking a job outside her home to financially support her family. She became disappointed until she found Zardozi members. There, she had access to a professional trainer and business development advisors by which she could come up with a great idea of starting her own business of tailoring in her home. She could engage her siblings to assist her in her new business at home. It was more acceptable for her society and more comfortable for Masuma, and her siblings to take their business at home and earn money through it. During the last six months, Masuma had earned 40000 AFN as her net profit by which she could pay the expenses of her brother's wedding and purchase raw materials for her business. Currently, two home producers and two-family members are working with Masuma in her business.

She proudly speaks this out now that no matter whether you are working from home or outside, you just need to value your ability and the courage to move on.

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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