



## Sustaining Zardozi January, 2019

*Nafisa uses solar power to run her embroidery machines*

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### An Embroidery Machine, Four Solar Panels, and Nafisa

“Self-belief and hard work will always earn you success”, believes 35 years old Nafisa- a mother of three daughters and three sons. Nafisa comes from Behsod district of Nangarhar province where she lives with her big family of ten people. Her husband is the only breadwinner, doing a small labor job which earns him 5000 AFS per month- not enough money to pay for all their bills.

Joining Zardozi became a turning point for an ordinary tailor Nafisa where she first stepped out of the four walls of her home, faced difficulties and took up the challenge to shape her life in a better way.

Among her other female friends, Nafisa grew her tailoring skills more rapidly. She bought two embroidering machines for her work. But to learn about its utilization she had to learn it from a professional tailor in the market.

Approaching the local shopkeepers, Nafisa was told that only men have the strength to operate these machines. “You are a woman. It is out of your capability,” she recalled of the shopkeeper’s words still buzzing in her ears. However, Nafisa says that she didn’t listen to his words and responded back with anger, “women and men have equal strength to work and earn money. I will prove it soon.”

Nafisa took the challenge, learned to run the machines, and applied for Zardozi loan to activate solar system in her house in order to avoid electricity problems. Her work gradually attracted other male tailors in the market who signed contracts with her and referred their customers to her.

With a big smile on her face and glitter of victory in her eyes, Nafisa says she showed her work to the tailor who had undermined women’s capability. “That sense of achievement was the best moment of my life,” she says.

Nafisa’s cleverness, energy and enthusiasm also led her to become tailoring assistant (namely service provider) to Zardozi business trainer in the Community Business Center (Manbeh). On Manbeh days, she guides other women on their tailoring skills for which she is also paid some money by the organization.

As part of Zardozi’s sustainability program, recognizing and hiring capacitated and diligent workers like Nafisa has helped the organization to sustain itself to some extent so that when there is no Zardozi, its operations will be still alive. Our objective is to create a cycle by empowering women with the right skills and self-confidence to run their societies and support other women.

## Kadars Helped Women in Eastern Kabul to Obtain National ID Cards



**Zardozi business trainer informing women about the significance of taking out National ID cards**

National ID card (NIC) is an indicator of an individual's belonging to a country to prevent forgery, ensure electoral transparency and ease public access to various services such as education, medical care, and employment. Unfortunately, in Afghanistan, majority of the women are still denied this basic human right. According to Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 56 per cent of women do not have NICs. This number is high despite all the efforts of government and national and international organizations that provide public awareness about the benefits of attaining Tazkiras.

Zardozi Kadars came to know the problem when women in Shewaki located in the South Eastern part of Kabul city, did not have identification cards to receive loans for their start-ups.

When the Kadars asked the women to make Tazkiras, they saw a resistance by the male family members who did not deem it necessary for women to have NICs.

Thirty-three years old Jamila who attends the Shewaki Manbeh said that she took her ID card when she was suffering from back pain and therefore had to travel to Pakistan. In order to travel, her family had to get her Tazkira. "Otherwise, I would never have one," says Jamila.

After discussing the problem with Kabul office, Zardozi Kadars decided to convince the families of the clients and spread awareness about the importance of National ID cards.

Persuading men to unlock their women from social taboos is not as easy as the story is being told in words or the successes being achieved. Neither is being a Kadar easy to tackle societal problems. Kubra explains that it took two months to talk to families and go back and forth to their homes until they finally convinced their men.

The men agreed only if the Kadars accompanied their women to get ID cards for them. Currently 22 clients of Zardozi have Tazkiras in Shewaki village. Some of them applied for Zardozi loans using their ID cards to start their businesses or buy the necessary equipment for expanding their work.

Sakina who attended NIC awareness session in Manbeh says, "There is nothing wrong with holding a Tazkira. It determines that I am Afghan; without it I am no one."

## 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 five 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

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improve the lives of women.**

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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

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