



Zardozi Clients Fight Coronavirus

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Zardozi clients in Herat use their tailoring skills to sew masks and support families

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Zardozi Continues Its Activities as Coronavirus Cases Climbs in Afghanistan

As the coronavirus spread rapidly across the globe, social distancing and staying at home orders by government came to effect immediately in Afghanistan as well. Businesses, schools, universities and offices closed down while many started working from home.

The quarantine, although necessary, had its side effects for the country's economy and people's life. Zardozi also took the brunt of the shut down as its programs for 6,000 clients in 4 provinces ceased to implement.

Nonetheless, as the staff and clients sat back in their homes, the uncomfortable feeling of those families suffering from hunger and depression inflicted by the global pandemic had Zardozi to not sit quiet at home and virtually serve as many clients as it can.

Zardozi minimized its activities and drafted plans that are focused on helping women find a different source of income using their tailoring and farming skills. Zardozi established online platforms for women who had access to smart phones and internet in their districts. So far, it has been successful at taking advantage from WhatsApp and IMO's social media platforms where Zardozi is connected to a range of 35 to 116 women in each of the four provinces.

These social media platforms are used for spreading awareness about coronavirus, announcing work opportunities, providing psychological help and business advice and implementing various other plans during the quarantine.

Zardozi's Achievements in Herat during Quarantine



Herat turned out to have the most cases of COVID-19 in Afghanistan. According to Aljazeera report, it became the hotbed for coronavirus cases as many Afghans returned from Iran and safety measures were underestimated.

The organization identified that health tips and awareness about preventing the virus is the foremost essential thing since rural areas are the most susceptible to the virus.

Zardozi's office in Herat was closed immediately after many deaths were

Herat clients working on retailer's order to protect against corona

reported and staff was instructed to work from home. Hence, while people got unemployed and helpless due to self-quarantine, Zardozi and Kadar came together to initiate plans that generated income for the poor families.

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As majority of the people did not have electricity, or access to TV and internet, two teams from Zardozi decided to distribute Corona related information brochures, and advertising posters that were easily understood by the uneducated population.

These brochures along with voice messages on loud speakers on top of trucks were provided by Herat's Department of Health to Zardozi, as a result of which 2995 people were given the posters in 18 districts of Herat.

During these times of lockdown, people's biggest concern was suffering from joblessness and hunger at home. To tackle this issue, clients were given the idea of cultivating vegetables at their houses which is both healthy and economical. Zardozi sent online training through its IMO chat box, gave loan and purchased seeds for clients who had land and the capacity to plant vegetables and sell them at a reasonable price in the market.

Meena who started growing vegetables in her backyard, says that this was an important initiative in the face of skyrocketing prices of food in the bazaar. She says if all families do the same, they will be able to slightly sustain themselves throughout this disaster.

At the same time, Zardozi clients also took preventative measures and used their tailoring skills to make masks and personal protection equipment kits that included gowns and gloves. They started their work by signing a contract of 15,000 masks and hundreds of gowns for Herat Public Health Department and a clinic.

The clients believe that making the PPT Kit has not only made an income for their families but it will also bring down the price of these equipment in the market if they sew many and sell them at a cost as low as 5 AFS per mask and 250-300 AFS per gown.

Zardozi's Herat Regional Office Manager says that the pandemic affected many of their clients' daily income but making the PPT kit was a good opportunity for 100 clients to earn some money for their children. She says that the clients work has attracted more clinics and supermarkets as the office continuously strives to bring more contracts for clients and do marketing for their product which will come at low cost for hospitals and people.

Zarifa Fights COVID-19 by Sewing Masks

Just like many of our clients in Herat, 28 years old Zarifa's economy was also hit by the coronavirus crisis and governments quarantine order.

Zarifa together with her two brothers, who are mechanics by profession, were the only breadwinner of the family but as the markets were closed, their financial situation also disrupted.

Zarifa contacted Nisfe Jahan office to seek for any kind of help that could help alleviate the situation.



Zarifa sitting by her tailoring machine to make masks for clinics

Zardozi's Mazar-e-sharif vocational/business trainers advised and helped her with preparing a new design of mask as a sample.

Meanwhile, Kadar in coordination of marketing team did some market research, showed Zarifa's masks' samples to clinics and drugstores and discussed business with them. Following few days of marketing, Zardozi's Mazar-e-sharif office introduced Zarifa to one of the drugstores who signed a big order with Zarifa.

Zarifa says, "Now I stitch 100 masks in a day and sell it for 10 AFS to the wholesaler. During this tough time, I get to support my family very well through this income. My whole family prays for Zardozi."

Zardozi's Mazar-e-sharif regional manager says that it's a very difficult time for everyone but even harder for the poor people. Although, protecting her staff is the first important part of her job, but each office member is ready to sacrifice to reach out to those in pain. They work day and night to come up with income generating ideas for women while taking social distancing into mind.

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

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