



2020 with Newsworthy Achievements

December, 2020

Naweeda and her employees packing the washing liquids

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Women in Jalalabad contribute to domestic products and urban development

It brings us great joy to see clients with successful businesses, women who have grown from where they were a few years ago to where they are now - more confident and courageous than ever. They are breadwinners for their families, they pay for their children's education, they take part in community problem solving, and altogether they are strongly empowered.

Activist women in Jalalabad were asked by their community to persuade the authorities to build a clinic in their village. Together the women submitted petitions to numerous Government offices, cajoled community leaders into giving their support, and finally found a philanthropist to donate a piece of land for the clinic. Everyone has now agreed and the clinic will be constructed in the New Year.

women are strongly motivated to set up a business to provide employment for the women in their communities who are less able to risk a business start-up. Mrs. Marina and Mrs. Naweeda are two women from Jalalabad province with strong entrepreneurship skills who recently set up new businesses employing many women from their communities.

Naweeda established a small workshop producing washing liquid which she sells locally at a price that is competitive with what is already on sale. She does her production in a corner of the yard of the family home. She employs three of her neighbours and her husband helps them by carrying the product to local shops or selling it directly in the market and by purchasing the raw materials.

Naweeda earns AFN 20,000 every month out of which she pays for the children's schooling and other household expenses. She plans to expand her business so every month she puts something aside ready to invest in bigger and better equipment in the future.

"I dream that one day Afghanistan will have modern factories that equal those in other richer countries. It is a great joy to me to think that with my little effort here I am advancing the economic development of my country" Naweeda says.

Recently, Marina established a tailoring workshop and hired 8 women from her community to work with her. Long before she starting her workshop she used to tailor for herself and her family and she never thought in those days that she could earn enough to employ others through tailoring.

When she joined Zardozi she came to understand from training and from seeing others expanding their businesses that she too could start her own business. Marina is encouraged to find that not only is she actually a skilled tailor she is also a capable businesswoman.

"I am very happy that after many challenges finally, I have been able to turn my ordinary tailoring into a wonderful profession," said Marina. She also added that she loves her work and she is happy seeing others satisfied with her products.



Women working with Marina in her shop

In her workshop, Marina and her employees work with velvet fabric to make festive and highly decorated garments and bed covers. They also design and make traditional bodice pieces and sleeve decoration pieces which are currently much in demand in the market.

"My customers used to travel to a neighboring country to buy party dresses and bed covers, but now they can get them from my workshop. It saves them time and money." Said Marina

Nafisa talks about the impact of technology on her business development

Mrs Nafisa is a Zardozi client living in Mazar-e-Sharif city who recently decided to improve her marketing. She created a Facebook page to reach out to new customers and she printed business cards and brochures to distribute to target customers in the city.

Marketing through the internet is not usual amongst Afghan female business owners particularly in they are living in a conservative community. There are many reasons for this, social media is risky for women as there are many predatory men who prey on female social media users. This means that family members usually discourage women from using social media. In addition, women are not usually skilled in IT and internet access is costly and services are patchy at best.

Zardozi M&E staff have been supporting Nafisa. When they dropped into her shop in mid-December she said she was very satisfied with her achievements during the last month. She mentioned that since posting content on her Facebook page her customer numbers increased and continues to increase day by day. It has even helped her to get in contact with previous customers from years ago with whom she had lost contact when they got married and moved away. Now they travel to her shop regularly to place orders with her and they are delighted with her designs and her stylish garments.

Nafisa talked about the difficulties she faced in starting a Facebook page and in getting her cards printed. She explained that her family had been vehemently opposed to her seeking any publicity fearing for her safety.

"From the moment you share your idea, others may oppose or even stop you, but if you believe that this is going to bring a great change, you have to stand for it and I am sure you will soon realize that it's worth all that struggle," Nafisa said.



Nafisa's daughter helping her mother in managing their facebook page

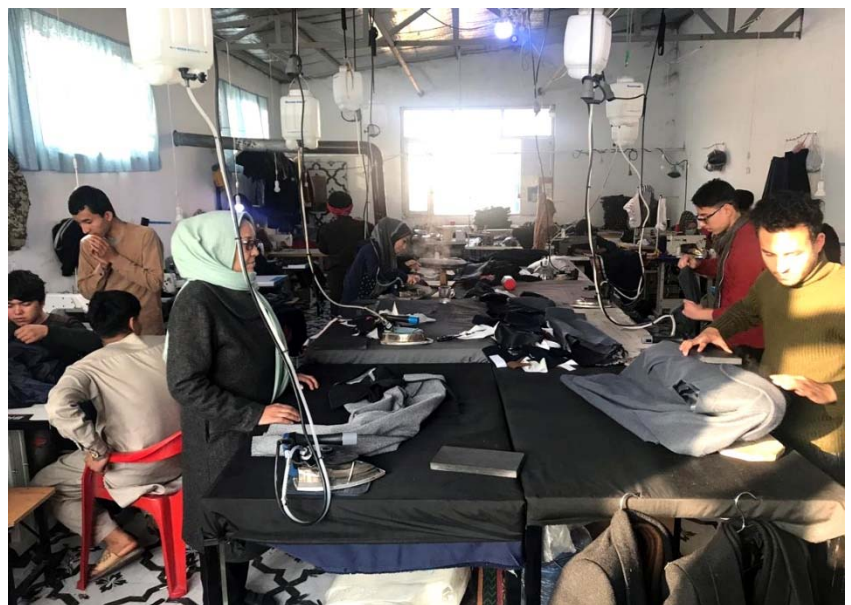
With a lot of effort, she finally succeeded in convincing her family and gained their support for managing her Facebook page. She takes their ideas while posting a sample of her work or quoting a price for her services. Nafisa's younger daughter was the one who suggested printing business cards and brochures for advertising her business in other areas of the city.

"I think it is a very useful way to know what the requirements of customers are and what they think about our services." Said Nafisa about her Facebook page. She also added that it's more comfortable chatting with customers in private about prices.

45 women and men benefit from working in Farida's tailoring workshop

Leading is a difficult task no matter what you lead a community or a business it always requires you to be proactive and caring." Said Mrs. Farida Sarabi.

Mrs. Farida is an active entrepreneur who has created many employment opportunities for both women and men in Mazar-e-Sharif city by establishing a tailoring workshop. Both female and male employees in that workshop have a common characteristic in that they are the only breadwinner of their family. Mrs. Farida has hired them and trained them to be professional tailors so that they can earn enough money to support their families and



Farida visiting her workshop and talking with her employees

even improve their lives. Near 70% of her employees are female and they earn monthly AFN 10,000 to 15,000.

Farida recently opened a new workshop in Kabul and hired more employees to work on contracts with garments retailers. Mrs. Farida considers

Farida recently opened a new workshop in Kabul, and hired more employees to work on contracts with garments retailers. Mrs Farida considers leadership and management skills as key to success and she has been an eager student of the leadership and business training sessions she has attended. She encourages all the women studying with her to be determined about their business goals and to make use of all the opportunities provided to them for their empowerment.

"I was lucky to find Zardozi to support me in all aspects of my business. Zardozi not only strengthens women's skills but also helps us to finance our requirements." Farida said as she has bought some equipment for her workshop using Zardozi microfinance support.

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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