



It's more than knowledge: love, sisterhood and one purpose to uplift each other

New Season New Achievements

May, 2019

Zardozi visits its sisters from PEKKA in Indonesia

In order to effectively serve Afghan women as well as achieve excellence in its programs, Zardozi made a third trip to Indonesia to revisit its sisters from PEKKA, a women’s empowerment organization in Indonesia. The trip was mainly arranged for learning purposes between Zardozi Kadars (Volunteer Members) and PEKKA.

In 2016, representatives of PEKKA came to Kabul after Zardozi got introduced to them in 2015 for a knowledge exchange. This year, in April 2019, Zardozi’s leadership team together with two Kadars had another opportunity to observe in-person the approaches PEKKA uses to address women’s problems in their communities. In fact, this exchange program is a useful initiative in achieving Zardozi’s objective to gradually empower Kadars by enabling them to make their own decisions and plan and implement Zardozi’s programs at the grassroots level.

PEKKA is recognized as one of the Japanese Social Development Fund (JSDF) and the World Bank’s best projects. It serves over 25,000 women ‘heads of household’ in more than 800 villages across Indonesia. PEKKA has been active in providing women various programs related to such issues as education, health, and access to justice, livelihood and women’s leadership in the community. The exchange program is a good learning experience for the two organizations as both shares a common ground: empowering disadvantaged women to support themselves financially.

IN THIS ISSUE

Zardozi participated in the Consultative Peace Loya Jirga

Today more than ever, Afghan women’s role in society and peace has been essential and evident. With the initiation of the Consultative Peace Loya Jirga, almost 3,000 delegates from across the country, including women who made almost 30% of the Jirga, came together as one to freely express their opinions. Zardozi representatives: Hasina Aimaq, program director, Aziza Karimi, Herat regional manager and a client also actively participated in the CPLG’s committees’ discussions and played a significant role in making their demands heard.



Ms. Aziza Karimi, the regional manager of Herat shares, “This Jirga was very important for women, because women were initially forgotten in the peace process, but today we had our rights preserved so that no deal is cut behind the curtains which could disregard our rights and accomplishments over the past several years.” “We are the main victims of war and if we don’t have a chair on the table today, we don’t have anything in the future either,” added Masouma, Zardozi’s client from a small village of Kabul.

In particular, the trip was a personal achievement for Zardozi volunteer members, the Kadars who are representatives of women in the community. “Who was I and where am I now?” said Ms. Kubra when she returned more committed to help the women of her community. She explained, “When I first began to work, I didn’t have the courage to get out of my home, but today I was not only out of my home but somewhere out of the country in a completely different world.” That was the kind of empowerment Ms. Kubra wants to attain for women in her village.

The takeaway of Salima, another of Zardozi’s Kadars, was that Indonesian and Afghan women encounter similar problems. During her stay, she heard about how a young girl was going to be given into marriage to an older man, but luckily the wedding was stopped by PEKKA’s Kadars, she acknowledged.

“Women over there work very hard and are very inspirational,” shared Salima. She also noted that Indonesian women were less restricted by men in terms of going out of the home, which she thought was a great advantage that a majority of Afghan women don’t have. This has been one of the biggest obstacles for Afghan women to get over.

Talking about lessons learned, Salima noted, “What made PEKKA different was that they had a separate group of Kadars for legal matters called Legal Kadars. We can integrate this into our programs because this group of Kadars was more professional, well-learned and effective in solving legal matters (e.g. divorce) and engaging with government.”



Economic empowerment of Indonesian women through carpet making [(Copyright) PEKKA]

Also, Zardozi regional manager, Ms. Nasreen Sahibzada was fascinated by the hard work and determination of women in Indonesia. The women gave a high percentage of their own savings as loans funds. “This is a very good approach for the self-sustainability of Kadars and clients. PEKKA now has 35,000 women enrolled in the savings groups, and without PEKKA’s or other foreign support, these women will always have their savings to receive loans.”

This knowledge exchange program has not only benefited Zardozi but also PEKKA when they visited Kabul and learned about the different strategies Zardozi used to outreach to women and their families.

On their trip to Kabul, PEKKA representatives were intrigued by Zardozi’s attempts to reach out to and connect with the family members of their clients, through events that celebrate successful women. “Such events appreciate not only women, but also their family members—especially supportive husbands—and this is a very strategic, smart approach in a context where women have lots of restrictions,” said PEKKA’s manager of institutional development Kodar Tri Wusananingsih about celebrating successful women events.

“It helps set a good example for families of other women,” added Wusananingsih.

At the end, the two organizations agreed on a long term commitment and more information sharing sessions in the future.

Farida Soorabi’s workshop created more jobs for women



Inauguration of Farida’s tailoring workshop

From a simple house-wife to leading more than 20 women today, Farida Soorabi is playing a great role as a good mother, a successful entrepreneur and an inspirational leader at her newly expanded tailoring workshop.

A few months ago when we wrote about Farida’s story, she told us that she was planning on expanding of her business. At the time, around 20 women were working for her.

But given the fine quality of her work, Farida received many clothes orders, from both inside and outside the country, which led her to open a bigger workshop, hire more women and buy more advanced equipment to decrease the burden of work as well as provide faster services to her customers.

Farida improved her business by securing loans from Zardozi on four occasions. This time she was able to use her savings and some support from her brother to rent a bigger place. Farida has 30 female workers at the new tailoring workshop, 15 of whom are clients of Zardozi. Each of them earns about 5,000 – 10,000 AFS doing work that ranges from stitching school uniforms to making Afghani embroidery dresses. Farida says, “I work closely with every woman to ensure they are effective at their work and have the skills to start their personal businesses. I want the best for other women so that they become self-reliant like me.”

Jamila, who works at Farida’s workshop, wisely shares, “We are very comfortable working with Ustad Farida. She inspires me a lot, because she is the first woman in our area who has her own tailoring workshop. This has always been men’s job.” Farida adds that some of the women came from other workshops to work with her, because they had felt harassed by some men. That is one of the many reasons why she is happy facilitating a place where young girls can earn income for themselves in a safe environment.

Farida plans to hire more female tailors as there is high demand for the Afghani clothes she produces. Since she has attracted some foreign customers, she is planning on opening a showroom for her products and creating social media pages, on which people in other provinces and outside the country can also see and purchase her products online.



More jobs for women means more women taking charge of their lives and leading by example for other women. A glance as Farida’s expanded workshop.



Ms. Hasina and Ms. Nasreen are awarding certificate of appreciation to Farida Soorabi

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

For more information, please contact:

info@zardozi.org

Zardozi – Markets for Afghan Artisans
Qala-e-Musa Square, Kabul, Afghanistan
www.zardozi.org

**Your donations can help us
improve the lives of women.**

**To donate please click on the
button below**



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