



A Bright Future from The Heart of Struggles

November, 2020

Khalida teaching the first lesson to her students

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Khalida runs a literacy course in her community

Mrs. Khalida is a Zardozi client in Kabul province who was fortunate enough to obtain her high school diploma before the Taliban invaded Afghanistan.

Mrs. Khalida believes that every woman regardless of her age has the right to learn to read and write. She says that although now we have more girls attending schools compared to the past two decades, still many women in Afghanistan have not had the opportunity to go to school and are now illiterate.

“My eyes sparkle with joy when I see an old lady reading a street address sign or an invitation letter in front of her family members.” She said. In her opinion, all educated girls and women should motivate illiterate women to start taking literacy courses, or at least teach them at home so that there are more literate women in the future.

Since she is so interested in women’s education she takes every opportunity to teach illiterate women; she teaches her neighbors and relatives whenever she meets them. When she joined the Community Business Center in Kabul, she noticed that some other clients had difficulty reading numbers and writing down the size of clothes so she decided to teach them numbers and words.

When Zardozi’s team came to know about Khalida’s efforts, they decided to provide her with teaching materials and also give free books to her students. The team has also appreciated Mrs. Khalida in a ceremony to launch her literacy course and promised to provide free books for any future classes. Two community activists participated in the opening ceremony encouraging women to attend regularly and be serious in their studies looking at this as a golden opportunity towards a better future. They said that although it is understood that learning is difficult for older people if they make learning their priority then they would succeed. One of the activists explained how she had struggled to become literate herself with her youngest daughter as her teacher.

They described quoted the famous proverb 'knowledge is power' and emphasized how knowledge can help women to be more independent and more involved in family decisions.

Zardozi's strategy workshop in November 2020



Participants taking part in the inclusive decision-making process

Zardozi has completed a successful strategy workshop in early November 2020 in which representative of Zardozi's beneficiaries presented their issues and opinions regarding the strategic direction of Nisfe Jahan (a grassroots women's support organization that partners with Zardozi).

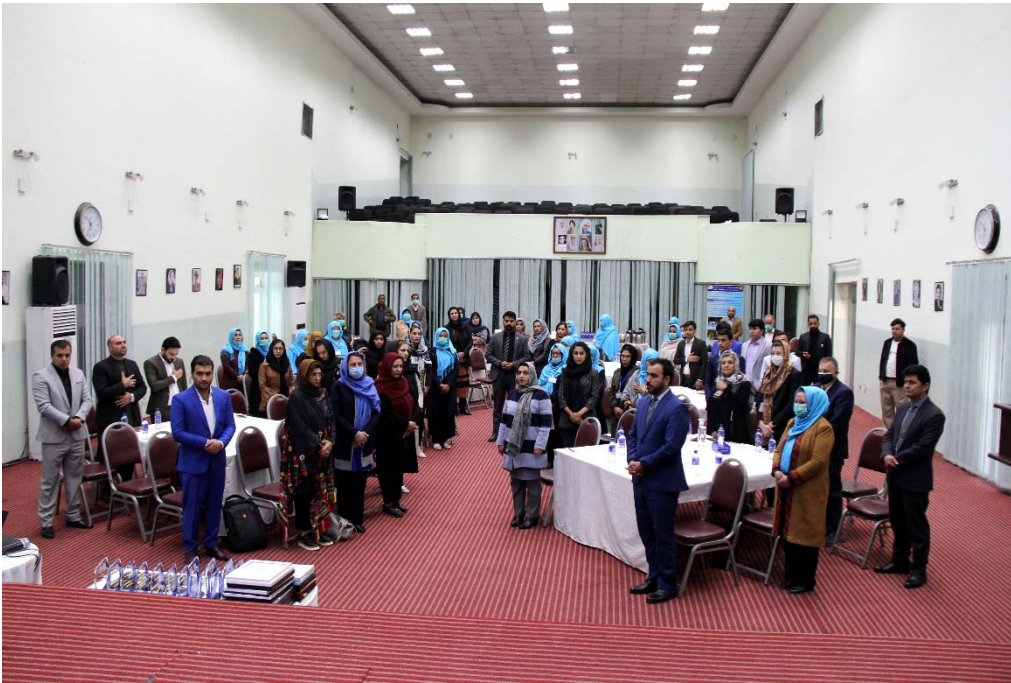
The participants included Zardozi clients who manage community business centers and Zardozi activist women from all four regions, together with Zardozi regional and operational managers develop strategies and plans regarding the structure of Nisfe Jahan and its services for beneficiaries, financial planning, and organizational development. This was a productive strategy workshop helping Zardozi to gain an insight into the views of clients and to develop plans and strategies that are both inclusive and effective.

Zardozi owes much of its success to a policy of inclusive strategy development. These annual strategy workshops are a powerful tool in ensuring that crucial strategic plans are made in collaboration with those who will be affected by them.

To ensure that participants are well prepared and able to understand the issues under discussion, Zardozi provides support to a wide variety of materials in these workshops. Although the majority of participants do not have even primary education they are nevertheless skilled and intelligent women and Zardozi values their input. Additionally, Zardozi runs mini-workshops during the main workshop regarding updates in reporting systems or the provision of new services.

In this strategy workshop, Zardozi focused more on the future of Nisfe Jahan and strategies to strengthen institutional development and autonomy. Additionally, the workshop sought to find ways to make Nisfe Jahan more sustainable and less donor-dependent to protect its valuable impact on the empowerment of its beneficiaries.

Zardozi celebrated its achievements with its friends



Zardozi celebrated its achievements in an appreciation ceremony held on Thursday, November 5, 2020, in Cinema Zainab Hall located in the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Zardozi took this opportunity to thank and appreciate its friends for their excellent cooperation and continual supports over the past years. In this ceremony, Zardozi had the honor to welcome valued guests from

Afghanistan's national anthem played at the beginning of the ceremony

international organizations, parliament members, and ministries.

Mrs. Hasina Aimaq, Zardozi's Program Director, has introduced the Kadars (Community Women Activists) to audiences and talked about their achievements and roles in solving urban and legal problems of their communities. "We have 22 Kadars in four regions whose impact is so great on the community they live with". She mentioned that Zardozi is flexible in its programs because its objective is to reduce poverty and empower women economically, so Zardozi provides variable services according to the women's capabilities and demands.

Mrs. Hasina Safi, Minister of Women's Affairs said, "I would like to firstly congratulate Zardozi on its successful strategy workshop, and then, I would like to express my happiness of seeing Nisfe Jahan's logo beside the Zardozi's logo in this ceremony. She talked about the areas Zardozi and its Kadars can cooperate with MoWA in future projects. She also said that her goal is to serve Afghan women and she will do anything in her power for women.

Dr. Shinkai Karokhail, Parliament Member mentioned the Women Empowerment as a common goal for all-powerful women and appreciated Zardozi for its effective programs in the economic empowerment of Afghan women. She encouraged women to use all empowerment opportunities to become independent and gain authority in the decisions made in their families. She has also emphasized on political participation of women in political issues. "Women need to have a strong network, and I appreciate Zardozi for its outstanding service of creating social networks for women. I believe our network is our strength." Her part of words. She spoke to the audience that Zardozi not only provides services but also keeps a beautiful part of our tradition alive. "Embroideries show our traditional culture in textiles, so I request Zardozi to double its efforts for the preservation of this treasure."

Mr. Ahmad Riaz Sediqi, the Director of Non-Governmental Organizations at the Ministry of Economy, started his speech by appreciating the Minister of Women Affairs for her success in a very challenging task of adding the names of mothers to national identity cards. He mentioned Zardozi as one of the NGOs with excellent budget management. He added that Zardozi creates significant results against its given budget allocated for the economic empowerment of women.

Zardozi's Program Director thanked the minister of women's affairs for her supports by presenting her with a statue of appreciation.

She also thanked Zardozi's donors for their precious supports that helped Zardozi to create such excellent results. "We convey our sincere thanks to our donors by presenting them with this statue. Your supports helped us to receive all these appreciations today from honored guests." She said.

In this ceremony, Zardozi appreciated its staff for their high understanding of responsibilities and duties, especially during the recent pandemic. The program director mentioned Zardozi as a leading organization with a low employee turnover rate as Zardozi has committed employees for some of whom have been with Zardozi for more than eight years. Zardozi's achievements are undoubtedly the result of the contribution of its dedicated employees who deserve every praise for their hard work and commitment.

Mrs Salima built a well and started a water supply business

Salima brought water to her own family and her neighbors which not only solved their water problem but also initiated a sustained source of income for her family. She noticed that her neighbors were having difficulty accessing water, having to travel a considerable distance daily. She decided to turn those difficulties into a business opportunity. She knew the water problem could be solved if she had enough money to dig a well for the people in her area, so she thought of the Zardozi loan.



Mrs. Salima benefited the households through her water supply business

Since Salima is one of our active clients in Mazar-e-Sharif and has a high credit Zardozi provided her with a large loan sufficient to cover most of the cost of digging a large well. When the well was dug, Salima laid in pipes to take the water to the surrounding houses.

Now her system supplies water to almost 70 families who are happy with the amount she is charging for the water as not only has it reduced the cost of carrying water to their homes but they now also have access to water in their homes at any time during the day.

Salima is paying back her loan and once this loan is repaid she plans to expand this business to more areas.

Salima says that she owes her success to her husband as he supported her idea and encouraged her to start this business. She also thanks Zardozi for supporting her in developing a start-up plan and providing her with a loan. "We all have good business ideas that could bring positive changes in our lives, but some of us never take the steps to actualize them because we may be afraid of loss or not receiving support," Salima said. She believes that if women who have business ideas can put their fears aside and express their thoughts, they will already have taken the first step towards actualizing their dreams.

Salima is a middle-aged woman who is the mother of four children and lives with her family in Mazar-e-Sharif. Earlier before the starting water supply business, she used to do tailoring in her home and since that time, she had the dream of managing a big business that could be both profitable for her and beneficial for her society, so she thought that was the perfect time to start this business and follow her dream.

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

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