



Zardozi Newsletter

March, 2018

Frozan at shop with her students drawing and receiving instructions from her

IN THIS ISSUE

Frozan incorporating several things in one shop

Out in an unconstructed part of Qala-e-Zaman Khan, Kabul, 22 year old Frozan's shop is a noticeable place. Its walls spray painted with graffiti with handmade bags hanging from strings. She joined Zardozi in 2015 and today we are acknowledging her achievements and success since she first began.

Frozan comes with an advantage of being born in an open minded, but not so financially fortunate family. Her father allowed her to complete school and supported her in achieving her goals and objectives even though her family had financial difficulties. The financial difficulties forced Frozan to work instead of continuing her higher education. Frozan says, "I am very happy I have a good father. If it was someone else, they would have given me into marriage as an asset for earning some money which is a usual practice in Afghanistan."

Ms. Frozan came to Zardozi already having some tailoring skills and owning her own shop which lasted for three months. At Zardozi, Frozan's trainers discovered that her shop was short lived due to lack of modern tailoring, hand craft skills. In addition, she also did not have the general management and accounting skills needed for a long term business

After receiving a loan from Zardozi as well as valuable training, Frozan re-opened her shop to both teach and make handicrafts, clothes and stitch bags.

During this period, Frozan partnered with two girls and two boys who came with a different skill set: calligraphy, painting and drawing. Learning this art from her partners, Frozan could also teach these skills to students in the neighborhood. Since Frozan is an educated girl, Zardozi trainers suggested that she learn computing skills and graphics. With her newfound computer skills, Frozan joined her partners in repairing mobiles, designs and Photoshop pictures, as well as sell songs to people. "There is good money in incorporating several things all in one shop which is also beneficial for the community to learn different skills," she explains.

Frozan says, "When I needed money for working on a new business idea, Zardozi gave me a loan, half of which I spent on buying a Laptop in order to manage my work and finances on my computer." She says, "A trainer from Zardozi taught me how to use the internet and suggested to me several websites where I can easily access and learn about new clothing designs and find products that are in high demand in the market."

Frozan says start-ups are not easy. "One has to invest a lot of energy and allocate a lot of time to it. Thanks to Zardozi for the seed money! Being too focused on running my business has prevented me from allowing time to study, but by the time I have enough money I will use it to support my education in the future. My dreams are not limited to this shop!"



Frozan's shop from the outside

Zardozi support group consultancy



Women at the support group expressing their freedom and strength

One balmy morning, a breeze drifts in from the windows of a small house on the hill top where several women have gathered together, sitting in a circle with their eyes closed, meditating and repeating the mantras over and over: "May my heart be kind, my mind fierce and my spirit brave. Create a life you can be proud of."

"I am free from violence."

Conducted in partnership with PARSA (Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Support for Afghanistan), this is Zardozi's

support and counseling groups initial warm up phase of training. This happens on a bi-weekly Manbeh day where Zardozi clients meet to get out of isolation, openly discuss their problems and find solutions.

Being unrecognized, deprived of an emotional support and suppressed by violence, these counseling groups, also called "Healthy Afghan Women Support Groups," have facilitated an atmosphere where women find hope, confidence and a helping hand to move forward.

It has been two years that PARSA has been providing these services to the less advantaged women that participate in the Zardozi Community Business Trainers. Yalda Azimi, one of Zardozi's program team member says, "The first year of carrying out these sessions was difficult and we had to stop our work for some time, mainly due to the reason that women were not familiar with this new idea of support groups and talking openly about their most secret issues in a group of 10-20 women."

Marnie Gustavson, the Executive Director and initiator of "Healthy Afghan Women Support Groups" in PARSA writes a blog about her experience: "In my experience, announcing a program as a psychosocial one can be the "kiss of death" for women's support groups in Afghanistan – unless there is a heavy stipend offered

for attending. Even though I had oriented them to our work a couple weeks back and assured all attending that this was not a program for crazy people, my attendees were very nervous about working with me.” Despite all that, the Zardozi team has been able to run this training smoothly with many women getting used to the idea, feeling more at ease and asking for more consultancy trainings.

Masoma says, “I feel comfortable and less isolated as I talk with other women here. Some of them have even bigger problems than me.”

During the same meeting, Laila shared with the group that her husband is taking another wife due to her inability to provide a son. Her mother in law has been urging her husband to find a new wife, leaving Laila at a loss for action or words.

As the conversation continues, more women speak about the problems they encounter, allowing the women to open up about the reasons behind them joining the support group. Zardozi provides an atmosphere of trust to the women who desperately look for help and advice.

The PARSA and Zardozi trainers say that this is not the only objective. They want to give the women a platform where they can feel better by talking but also to have an idea of solving those problems and moving forward in their lives. Hopefully these women will have enough confidence to create support groups for others to reach out to a larger amount of women facing daily violence and provide support.



Sitting in a circle with other women, Laila captured meditating, holding close to her child

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



Zardozi's programme of Economic and Social Empowerment for Afghan Women is undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through Global Affairs Canada

Canada 