



Zardozi Markets for Afghan Artisans



Rabia's laundry business

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Rabia's Laundry Shop Business

Rabia from Mazar-e-Sharif is a war widow. Being a single parent, Rabia takes care of her 15 years old daughter and 8 years old son alone. After her husband's death, she realized how helpless she had become, because her husband was the only breadwinner in the family but now that he was gone, Rabia had to work outside and earn money. "I did not know how to complete my children's necessities. I went through very hard days. Some nights we had to sleep without any food and other days the home owner would warn us to evacuate for missing out on due rents" said Rabia despondently.

Rabia had to do something about her situation. She neither wanted to remarry to end her dependency nor did she urge to beg on roads and streets. Therefore, when one day her aunt went to visit her, she told Rabia about Zardozi and its services. Rabia without finishing her cup of tea, impatiently left the house with her aunt and enrolled herself in business and marketing trainings of Zardozi. After learning about running a business, Rabia came up with the idea of starting a laundry shop business. Zardozi too liked her idea for the laundry business serves a growing need of people to outsource their cleaning tasks because of a lack of time to do it themselves. Soon Rabia took loan from Zardozi and rented a shop. With that loan she could buy good washing machines and other necessary materials for her shop.

Before Rabia opens her shop, Zardozi conducted a survey in the area to ensure Rabia's laundry business run efficiently. As a result, many people showed interest and most of the houses could afford going to a laundry room.

After opening the laundry shop, Rabia started to receive orders from a nearby dormitory from which she charged 50 per dress. The customers were satisfied with the prices and cleaning services; therefore, they continually brought clothes to the laundry room. As Rabia's customers and demand for washing their clothes increased, she realized she needed more machineries to get many orders done in less time; that is why she needed more loan from Zardozi.

"The business keeps me very busy but also happy, because I don't have to rely on anyone for money. I can provide all the opportunities for my children which used to be prepared by their father." Said Rabia. She further added, "What makes me proud is that my laundry shop services not only facilitate my life but the entire neighborhood is benefited by it."

Rabia hopes to pay back her first loan in four months and then take second loan from Zardozi to purchase more machineries. Observing a rapid success in her business, Rabia says that, “beside the laundry shop, I also wish to have an ironing business since my customers also asks for it especially students in the dormitories.”

Meena: A profile

34-year-old Meena, from Kabul province is one of the very first clients of Zardozi who joined the organization when it was newly established. Meena story begins as she was given in marriage to an old man when she was only 15 years old. Meena with her 7 children lives with her in laws who treat her more as a servant. She does all home chores on her own for 12 hours every day. Meena having suffered the unfair conditions of her life, had lost complete hope. She said, “After marrying, my happiness ceased to exist. I thought this is my destiny and I have to live with it forever.” “One day when one of our neighbors came to our home said that there is an organization who help women to put an end to their miseries. I was very encouraged when the women told me a lot about the organization and how it had influenced her life positively.” Meena added.

Meena joined Zardozi secretly with the support of her sister in law with whom she had built good relations during her marriage life. Meena shared this problem with Zardozi who advised her to convince her family, because in a country like Afghanistan where the secret behind women’s success is ‘family’s support’, Zardozi aims to work closely with the families in order to seek their support in recognizing and valuing women’s role. Therefore, some of Zardozi staff members visited Meena’s house and spoke to them about how Zardozi helps women to improve their lives as well as informed them about its Community Based Services where Meena can go for receiving trainings and finding solutions to her problems.

Fortunately, Meena was able to continue to go to Zardozi tailoring trainings. She said, “I was able to learn a lot in less time, because I had learned preliminary tailoring skills from my mother but what I needed the most to know was how to sell my products.” Taking that into consideration, Zardozi linked her to markets and introduced her to join Zardozi’s exhibitions which enabled Meena to sell her products at good prices and find more customers.

Meena now handles tailoring business, works at her mini beauty parlor and also makes greek medicine which she had learned from an Indian women who used to be her neighbor. She says, “My monthly income is 60,000 Afs which has facilitated a comfortable life for me and my family members.”

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
Shahid square, in front of Etisalat main office,
Kabul, Afghanistan
www.zardozi.org



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