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SUCCESS STORY

Generating Income for Women

Jewelry making leads to long term development in Kabul Province



[ASGP/Kabul Staff]

30 vulnerable women are learning skills in jewelry making and hope to develop their Association into a sustainable cooperative.

With support from USAID, the Ambassador's Small Grants Program is strengthening the capacity of women-focused civil society organizations to contribute to the social, economic, and political development of women throughout Afghanistan.

Sra Mena district of Kabul Province is home to a large number of poor families, many of which are headed by women. Many women are war widows, illiterate and extremely poor, unable to adequately support their families or pay for the expense of sending children to school. Mrs. Parigul has also lost members of her family including her husband in the civil war and now supports her children on her own. With a practical idea, she saw an opportunity to change the dire situation faced by women in her community.

After receiving lessons in wood carving from a non-profit organization, Mrs. Parigul decided to gather a group of women from her community and establish the Kabul Women's Skill Development Association. Bringing twenty women together, she started a literacy program for the members, purchased precious stones and tools, and began making jewelry by hand. The products were exhibited at fairs and markets. Income started flowing. The Association was registered with the Government and through encouragement from participants, more women became involved.

Once ASGP heard about Mrs. Parigul's initiative, ASGP Community Development Facilitators helped her prepare a grant application for funding to bring more women into the program and purchase machinery to grind and polish the stones. In March 2010, the Association's ASGP Quick Impact Grant was awarded.

Now, more than 50 women can cut and polish better quality stones using machine grinders and polishers. They are also making uniquely designed jewelry that has high demand in the local markets. They are paying for their children's school expenses and taking care of their families with the income earned from the jewelry. Upon completion of the project, the members of the Association decided to apply for another grant to further expand their operations into a cooperative, making each woman an owner in their enterprise. Although the ASGP grant is now closed, the women continue to produce jewelry to sell on the local market, generating income for their families.