



USAID
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AFGHANISTAN

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FIRST PERSON

One Woman at a Time

Small grants funded by USAID are helping thousands of women to gain vocational skills



Photo: USAID/ASGP

“A widow among us was crying with happiness when she received \$30 after selling the cloth she weaved herself.”

— Halima, Samangan Province

Women across Afghanistan are beginning to prove their significance at home and within the community thanks to the opportunities for economic generation and enhanced participation provided by the international community and many Afghan civil-society organizations.

Halima is a 32 year old mother of four. Her family lives in a rented house in Samangan Province. Like many other men in the community, Halima’s husband does not have a steady job. He owns a four wheel cart and leaves home at sunrise hoping to make enough to put food on the table for his family each night. Some days, he comes home with a smile after earning a day’s wage. On other days, he barely earns enough to purchase a few pieces of bread for his family’s dinner.

Funded by USAID, a survey group from the Fadak Social Association visited Halima’s village last year. A large stock of cotton is available locally, and the group’s aim was to launch a training activity for the community to teach skills in producing string and cloth. Eager for an activity to help provide an income for her family, Halima joined the training activity. For four months, she learned to make string and how to use a loom to produce cloth. Now, Halima produces cloth and towels that she sells in Aybak City and through the Fadak Social Association. She uses the income to pay for household expenses and provide for her children’s education.

The textile activity now includes more than 100 women in the village, each making around \$100 per month from the sale of cloths and towels. One widow in the group was happy after receiving 1,600 Afs (\$30) for cloths she had weaved herself. She had never seen this much money. “Throughout her life, the widow had only ever dealt with 10 to 20 Afs. Now she has so many more opportunities,” said Halima.

Working outside of the home, Halima contributes to her family income and has a voice in her family’s survival. She has also started training other women from her village to produce cloth, spreading her knowledge and successfully building the capacity of many other women in her community.