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AFGHANISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Providing Employment to Disadvantaged Women in Farah

Disadvantaged women in Farah are manufacturing thousands of gabions for a retaining wall, while supporting their families.



Farah City woman manufactures gabion wires while her children look on.

Photo: CADG



Farah City: 108 poor and widowed Afghan women receiving their first wages as part of the USAid FIRUP project.

Photo: CADG

In western Afghanistan's Farah Province, the women of Farah City endure a difficult plight. The rate of unemployed family heads and widowed women is as high as 80% of the population. Furthermore, many women possess skills which could provide a necessary income to support their families. However, as a result of security and cultural norms, women are seldom allowed to leave the confines of their home to seek employment opportunities.

In response to these local needs, Central Asia Development Group's (CADG) Food Insecurity Response for Urban Populations (FIRUP) Program has provided employment and training to Afghan women participating in manufacturing gabion wires for a large canal retaining wall in Northern Farah City. Hundreds of women applied for the job, and the local Ministry of Women's Affairs accepted 108 of the most disadvantaged women. Since 3 January, 2010, 5,604 meters of gabions, or wire mesh which holds rocks in place for the purpose of erosion control, has been manufactured.

When interviewed, women expressed they are now able to feed their families, send their children to school, and do so with less scrutiny from family and community members. "Before, my husband's brothers would not allow me to work outside the home", says Tajvar, a 25 year old widow, "but this opportunity allows me to work from inside the home so I can provide my six family members with food. I can also send my children to school." The women are paid \$6 per day and women of all ages are participating: "My family is very happy every pay-day", says Jamila, a 52 year old widow, "I can now send my grandchildren to school and work comfortably inside my home".

The project has created 3,780 women days of labor, with each women producing two meters of gabion per day. Most importantly, the disadvantaged women of Farah are empowered to support themselves and their families. "We would be beggars if I did not have this job" explained 33 year old Najibah from District No. 1, "My children are very happy that now we can live a better life."