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AFGHANISTAN

Breaking Barriers: Apprenticeship Program Helps Women Rise from Adversity to Success

USAID's AVCP Women Apprenticeship initiative equips Afghan women with essential skills, fostering sustainable livelihoods.



USAID/AVCP

Shokria demonstrates her new carpet weaving skills, gained through the USAID-supported AVCP apprenticeship, providing her family a brighter future.

"This opportunity has woven a new path for me. With every skill I have gained, I am building a stronger future for my family and myself."

The fiber value chain in Afghanistan offers significant potential for empowering women and contributing to economic resilience. Through USAID's Afghanistan Value Chains Program (AVCP), women are gaining the skills and opportunities needed to participate in key economic sectors in the activity's women's apprenticeship initiative.

At just 20 years old, Shokria is the primary provider for her family of five in Herat City. Her family faces immense challenges, including lack of a male breadwinner and illness. Despite these difficulties, Shokria remained committed to her studies while working to improve her family's economic situation.

Shokria's pivotal moment occurred when she was selected as an apprentice at Khalid Carpet through the USAID's AVCP apprenticeship initiative. This initiative, which provides Afghan women with critical skills and resources to engage in the workforce, gave Shokria the opportunity to learn the art of carpet weaving. Although she had no prior experience, Shokria excelled in her training, quickly mastering the craft and becoming proficient in raw material processing and intricate weaving techniques.

This newfound expertise positioned Shokria for a new career path. Her first apprenticeship stipend allowed her to cover basic family expenses, such as food, rent, and the medical needs of her mother. Shokria now plans to secure a full-time role at Khalid Carpet, ensuring long-term economic security for her and her family. Shokria's story exemplifies the impact of the women's apprenticeship initiative. By providing women with the skills needed to contribute meaningfully to Afghanistan's economy, USAID/AVCP is fostering both economic growth and social inclusion. Shokria's success is a testament to how targeted support can transform lives, helping women break through traditional barriers and build sustainable livelihoods.

Since January 2024, AVCP has placed 1,005 apprentices in 22 host firms across multiple sectors, with 952 graduates and 502 securing full-time employment. This achievement highlights the program's critical role in empowering women and promoting economic resilience in Afghanistan.