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AFGHANISTAN

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FACT SHEET

Afghan Women's Business Council (AWBC)

OVERVIEW

Afghan women play an important role in the country's agriculture sector but often lack opportunities to learn new skills and create businesses to take full advantage of the country's array of fruit and vegetables. In an effort to create more opportunities for Afghan women, Mahooba Waizi helped establish the Afghan Women's Business Council (AWBC) in 2003 to provide local women with access to training, capital, and other resources to create businesses in the agriculture sector.

As part of its Accelerating Sustainable Agriculture Program (ASAP), USAID formed a partnership with AWBC in April 2010 to create an integrated gender and development program that would help hundreds of local women. The centerpiece of this partnership is the provision of fruit and vegetables at Badam Bagh Demonstration Farm, a modern research and demonstration farm in Kabul owned by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock and supported by ASAP, for harvesting and marketing by AWBC's women members. With the support of ASAP, AWBC is giving hundreds of Afghan women the tools to turn Afghanistan's fresh produce into profit.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- Harvest and market produce from Badam Bagh Demonstration Farm
- Provide training to disadvantaged women on how to harvest, clean, sort, package, market, and sell Badam Bagh produce, grow with modern agricultural methods, and adhere to sanitary practices
- Implementing a plan to create a business consortium, which is composed of all 11 ASAP partner women organizations in Kabul and Parwan provinces. The consortium will work collectively and leverage each other's resources as they try to break into the export market

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Trained more than 2,500 women from AWBC in proper harvesting and post-harvesting techniques, good agricultural practices, principles of hazard access and critical control points, and marketing techniques
- Generated \$50,000 in sales from Badam Bagh produce which pays the salaries of the women working on the farm and is funneled into training on fruit processing and handicraft making for other disadvantaged women in the area
- Trained 556 women on how to make handicrafts and more than 1,100 women on how to make jam and pickles
- They have sold their jam, pickles, and handicrafts for more than \$54,000
- Negotiated a land lease agreement for one-half jerib of prime land in the center of Parwan Province to erect a multi-purpose building that will house a women's farm store, display area, and a training center for women organizations, including a demonstration farm which ASAP is setting up