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**AFGHANISTAN**

## SNAPSHOT

# Carving out a Lucrative Future

**One businesswoman finds an international market for her crafts.**



FAIDA

*Noorjahan Mahmoodzada displays her intricate and expertly crafted items.*

***Nineteen year old business owner, Noorjahan Mahmoodzada, is excited to expand her business through the contacts she made at the Doing Business with Afghanistan Conference and Exhibition in India***

Nineteen year old Noorjahan Mahmoodzada sits contently at her woodcrafts shop located in the Women's Garden in Kabul reflecting on the business meetings she has recently participated in at the Doing Business with Afghanistan Conference and Exhibition in India. At the conference, facilitated by the USAID funded Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan (FAIDA) project, she was able to sell some of her crafts to the Afghan and Indian audience, but more importantly, she made the necessary connections to export her products to India. Additionally, she is in discussions with an Indian company to purchasing specialized machinery for her work.

Noorjahan is the owner and president of the Mahmoodzada Wood Carving Industry. She started as an apprentice and made her way up to trainer through years of study under her parents, eventually running the entire company. The fifteen women and ten men in her company carve wood into traditional designs, transforming the blocks of wood into eye-catching decorations. Some of the more intricate items sell for as much as \$2,000. In her recent trip to India, she was able to sell two wood-carved portraits, one of the Governor of Balkh and the other of Late Commander Masoud. Her staff specializes in Arabic and Persian calligraphy, making beautiful frames out of copper.

On November 26, 2013, reflecting on her experience, Noorjahan affirmed, "Participation in conferences and exhibitions is a great avenue for introduction of my business to the outside world. But more importantly this gives me a lot of confidence and courage to try harder and improve my business. In the Indian exhibition all the businessmen were praising my work. Even here in Afghanistan, people show me a lot of respect because of what I do and because of what I achieve, and this would have not been possible if it was not for the generous support and assistance that the FAIDA project always extends to me." Noorjahan looks forward to expanding her business and investing in improving the quality of the wood she uses for her products.