

PD-ABJ-775

ISA 91541

**FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT (FNR)**

**Grant Number** : IRC/RAP # 79

**Implementing Organization:** Save the Children (US)

**Project title** : Afghan Women's Income Generation  
Project; IRC/RAP

**Target Area** : Nangarhar Province, Mohmandara District  
Ghazni Province, Qarabagh District  
Baghlan Province, Nahrein District

**Grant Period** : March 1, 1992 to October 31, 1993

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**I. SUMMARY OF PROJECT:**

**A. General Outcome:**

The "Afghan Women's Income Generation Project" provided 1,600 women with the opportunity to earn essential income from the production of handicrafts in a culturally appropriate setting, i.e., their own homes, therefore overcoming the restrictions placed on women's mobility by *pardah*, the veiling and seclusion of women.

Afghan women in the Mohmandara, Qarabagh and Nahrein districts of Nangarhar, Ghazni and Baghlan Provinces respectively, produced traditional embroidery from kits distributed to them by SC(US). The completed embroidered items were collected and transported to Peshawar and, in turn, to Islamabad, where they underwent washing, finishing and quality control procedures before being sold through SC's five craft shops in Pakistan and export markets. Of particular importance is the fact that more than 60% of the women participating in this project were sole family bread winners, including war widows, women married to disabled men and those whose husbands cannot find work due to the limited employment opportunities available throughout these districts.

Both field staff and monitors reported that women participating in the project have gained an increased sense of self-esteem as a result of their status as breadwinners and the respect they have received from the male members of their families and communities. This is due to their ability to contribute income.

The project was also successful in developing the skills of many participating artisans who were provided with opportunities to interact with and learn from more skillful artisans.

SC was planning to phase this project over into a USAID funded Group Guarantee Lending project, targeting many of the same beneficiaries. Unfortunately due to USAID cutbacks in 1994, the project was not approved.

**B. Major Events Affecting Outcome:**

Due to fighting in Kabul in 1993 the distribution of Craft Kits was delayed by 3 months. Therefore SC requested a no cost extension from IRC/RAP, which was agreed.

**C. Community Contribution:**

As the project is an income generating project for women to subsidize their families income, there is no significant community contribution.

**II. PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS:**

**A. Goal:**

- To increase the income earning opportunities available to families living in rural Afghanistan.

**1. Objectives:**

- By the end of four months, to provide 1,500 women with an average income of 4,450 Afs. per month in return for the craft items they produce.

**B. Goal:**

- To improve the economic bases in these rural communities.

**1. Objectives:**

- By the end of the project provide 2,000 women earning an average per month of Afs. 6,000 for the craft items they produce.

**C. Goal:**

- To increase the income earning opportunities available to families living in rural Afghanistan.

**1. Objectives:**

- By the end of the project period to pay a total of Rs. 2,436,480 to women participating in the project.

**2. Activities:**

- Number of producers: 1,600
- Paid to Producers : Rs.1,822,985
- Number of completed kits received: 18,229

## Completed activities by Provinces:

### 1. Nangarhar Province; Mohmandara District:

- Approximately 500 artisans received regular income until the project was phased out;
- Items were received from artisans;
- Rs.269,841 were paid to artisans.

### 2. Ghazni Province; Qarabagh District:

- 893 artisans received regular income.
- Items were received from artisans; (The quality of work from Qarabagh is the best received due to the more complicated designs produced in the area).
- Rs.805,309 were paid to artisans.

### 3. Baghlan Province; Nahrein District:

- 707 artisans received regular income;
- Items were received from artisans;
- Rs.747,835 were paid to artisans.

## Description of Activities:

The project began with 100 artisans in Nangarhar and Ghazni before the Nahrein district of the Baghlan Province was surveyed and test kits distributed to determine potential producers.

On March 24, 1993 the Nangarhar Project was closed in consultation with IRC/RAP, due to the assassination of UNHCR staff in Nangarhar province.

Although the project received a three month no-cost extension, the objective of providing 2,000 producers with income earning opportunities was not reached due to the phase out of the project, as previously discussed with IRC/RAP.

Instead, as indicated above, a final total of 1,600 women (excluding Nangarhar) participated in the project.

However, the project's achievement of developing the skills of its staff should be noted, particularly the training and quality control skills of the project's Coordinators and the resultant skills development of Village Assistants. Improvements in artisans' skills and the quality of the items they produced were also observed due to the influence of skillful artisans on those with fewer skills.

### III. UNANTICIPATED ACTIVITIES:

No unanticipated activities were undertaken.

### IV. Obstacle:

The political and military developments in Kabul created problems for transportation of kits to the project site.

On September 5, 1993, during transportation from Baghlan to Peshawar, 311 completed embroidery kits were stolen. Although SC made efforts to retrieve these, unfortunately this was unsuccessful.

#### A.1. UNCOMPLETED OR UNSUCCESSFUL ACTIVITIES:

All the activities, planned and cited in the project proposal, were successfully completed except for the Group Guarantee Lending Training.

Save the Children was planning to phase over from handicrafts to group guarantee lending in Baghlan. Unfortunately, due to the planned cuts in the USAID budget for 1994, it appears that USAID is no longer able to fund this project. Therefore training of promoters and coordinators did not take place.

##### a. Problem:

The closing of Nangarhar project in consultation with IRC/RAP in March 1993 reduced the number of beneficiaries involved in the project from the targeted figure of 2,000 to the final figure of 1,600.

Furthermore, the impact of severe weather conditions during January and February 1993 meant that Coordinators from Ghazni and Baghlan could not come to Peshawar to collect kits for distribution to artisans. The third delivery of kits throughout these Provinces was therefore delayed until late March, resulting in fewer women receiving kits than was anticipated.

##### b. Action Taken:

b.1. The problem of dealing with different standards of artisans' work, ranging from women achieving the highest standard of embroidery to those requiring training, and therefore the quantities of kits to order for each village (tailored to these varying capacities), was overcome by extensive monitoring of the work quality.

b.2. To some extent, the no-cost extension of the project assisted in overcoming the substantial reduction in the number of kits distributed to producers during the original period of the grant.

b.3. Monitoring of this project was originally performed by men, resulting in an inability to obtain first hand information on issues affecting artisans and ways to overcome problems experienced by women. SC then hired a female monitor to overcome this problem.

**B. General Difficulties:**

The recent political changes in Afghanistan have considerably reduced general difficulties for this type of project. However, political and military instability still exists and thus may adversely affect future project implementation.

**V. Conclusion:**

**A.1. Project Design:**

In general, rural Afghanistan remains poor. The standard of living for many in the rural areas has dropped dramatically and as rural economies in Afghanistan operate largely on a simple barter system, the opportunities to engage in cash generating activities are limited. Obviously, it will take several years before small farms are fully productive again. This, combined with the war damaged economy and the death of many Afghan males, has created a widespread need for supplementary family income in Afghanistan.

Afghan women are very restricted in their opportunities to contribute in a meaningful way to their families' economic security. By participating in this project, women have increased their family income by between 30 to 60 percent.

SC/US was granted approval for the initial project for the period March 1, 1991 to December 31, 1991. Due to the USAID suspension, in effect from July 1991, SC completed only a small portion of the project's objectives and goals. Community leaders from each province have been to the Peshawar office requesting assistance. Many other women also requested to be included in this project.

## 2. Project Implementation:

As a highly successful partnership was developed with the community, future project implementation of any kind will not face problems. The communities benefiting from this project have been extremely cooperative.

As this rural area has high potential to absorb a substantial number of returning refugee as well as highly cooperative communities it is, therefore, strongly recommended to provide continued assistance for development of the area.

## 3. Project Monitoring and Evaluation:

A monitoring mission went to assess the Qarabagh component of the project in May 1992. The mission focused on the progress of the project towards targets outlined in the project's work plan, staff performance, procedures employed to register producers and importantly, the effects of the project on the community and, specifically, its impact on the lives of participating women.

The monitoring team, comprised of management staff from SC's Peshawar Program Office, included the Coordinator of SC Peshawar's Women in Development sector. This visit therefore presented the first opportunity to SC to interview women participating in the project and therefore gain a much closer understanding of issues affecting their lives in general and issues concerning the project in particular.

Discussions took place with both the project's female staff and 720 producers from both Pashtoon and Hazara communities. Policies adopted by SC governing the selection of project participants, project objectives, and procedures adopted in the project's implementation were discussed, together with problems experienced by producers and possible solutions to these.

Feedback received from the women interviewed and from community leaders indicated that, in spite of difficulties encountered throughout the project affecting the number of kits distributed and therefore the number of beneficiaries, the Qarabagh community was very supportive of the project.

The hope was expressed that the project could continue and that SC would expand its role in the project area to include health services for women and children.

**4. Financial Management:**

The project was completed well within budget and an IRC/RAP audit in July 1993 revealed few problems.

**B. Recommendation:**

The results of this project considerably assisted the community, in particular women, in meeting their basic needs more adequately. The existing situation will greatly improve if projects in the following sectors are also implemented:

1. Mother and child Health projects;
2. Education projects; and
3. Water and Sanitation projects.

These recommendations are only partially based on the project dealt with in this report as SCF/US has been working for many years in these areas.

**VI. Project Monitoring:**

**A.1. Dates of Mission:**

May 1992, August 1992, April 1993 and June 1993.

**A.2. Project Sites Visited:**

Qarabagh, Mohmandara and Nahrein.

**A.3. Name and Title of Monitor:**

Mr. Noor-ul-Haq Monitor SCF/US  
Ms. Rahima Monitor SCF/US  
Ms. Patuni Hadayat Manager of WID SCF/US  
Mr. Aart Marten Program Manager SCF/US (only Mohmandara)  
Mr. Dur Mohammad Fazil Assistant Program Manager SCF/US

**VII. Evaluation:**

**A. Project Impact:**

The project succeeded in achieving IRC/RAP's objective of increasing rural cash income and reaching an under-served segment of the population to the extent that 1,600 Afghan women, the majority of who were considered financially disadvantaged and in many cases, without strong family supports, were provided essential income to support their families.

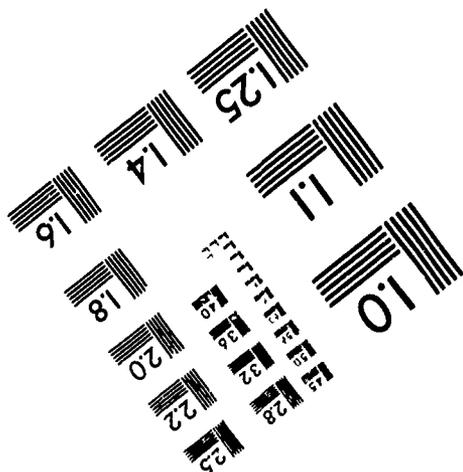
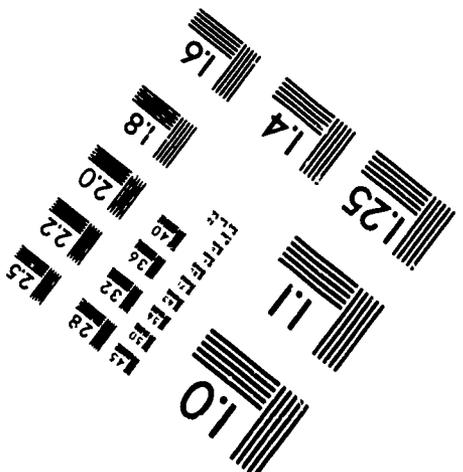
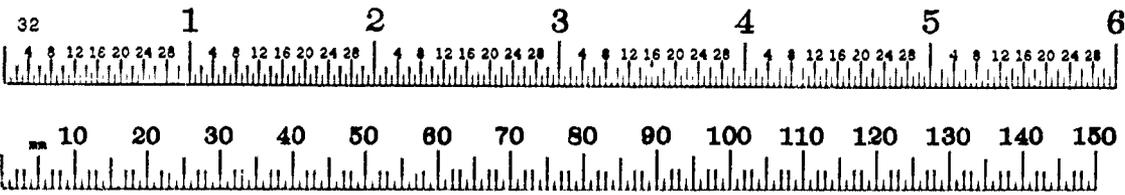
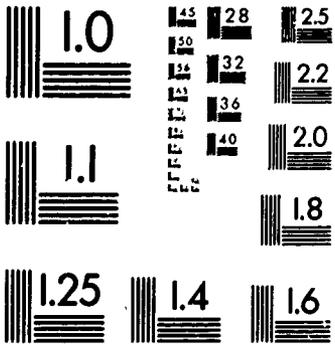
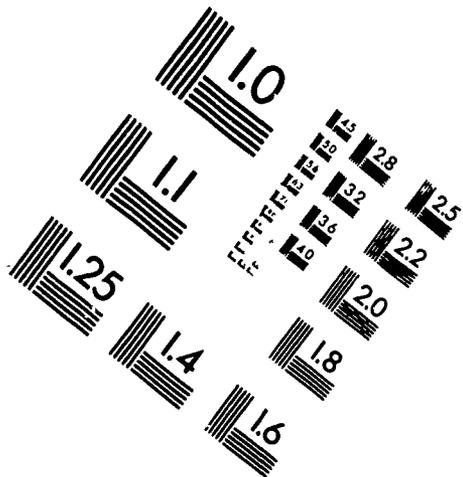
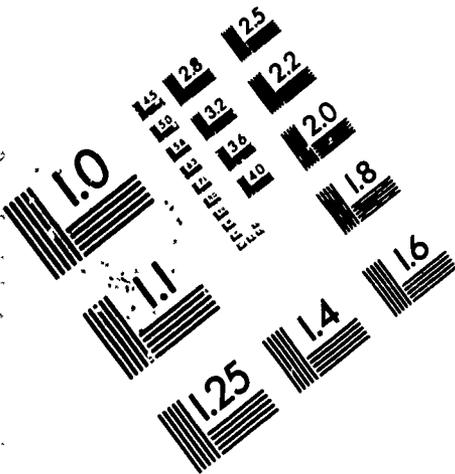
Given the difficulties involved in targeting rural Afghan women for any form of assistance because of cultural restrictions, it can be safely said that the project successfully promoted the notion that women can play a significant role in contributing to family income.

The project had a significant impact on the skill levels of both project staff and many artisans resulting from the training of project Coordinators and Village Assistants by SC and the practice of encouraging artisans to undertake work in groups within their homes. Village Assistants and Coordinators quickly became familiar with the quality standards needed for successful marketing and were able to effectively monitor the standards reached by artisans and ensure that less skillful artisans benefitted from the guidance of those with better skills.

As one of the project's major achievements was to show that it is possible for Afghan women to earn income, it is unfortunate that, due to USAID 1994 budget cuts, it was not possible to phase over into a group Guarantee lending project.

The above conclusions were made on the basis of interviews with key informants and project participants and observations made by project Monitors and field staff.

# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (MT-3)



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