

RESULTS SUMMARY

ANNEX D1 Empowerment of Afghan Women in Private Sector

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PROJECT	Title:	SPA-2025-MEED-AFG
	Partner:	MEED Direct Intervention
	Country:	Afghanistan
	Period:	2025

CHANGE	Building on the success of the 2024 SPA-funded pilot project supporting women-led dairy micro-enterprises, MEED secured additional funding to replicate and expand the initiative through four new centers, all in North East Afghanistan. The project strengthened women's capacities in small business development, dairy processing, and entrepreneurship, while creating pathways to sustainable economic opportunities. A total of 300 women are now generating income through these businesses, contributing to their economic resilience.
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CONTEXT	Women in Afghanistan continue to face severe restrictions on access to education, employment and public participation. As a result, women, particularly female-headed households, remain highly vulnerable to poverty, social exclusion, and limited economic opportunities. The restrictive policies imposed by the Taliban constrain women's participation in socio-economic activities, exacerbating their vulnerability to a variety of protection risks.
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CONTRIBUTION	The positive results of the SPA pilot project demonstrated the effectiveness of women-led private economic initiatives and created the foundation for up-scaling. The expanded initiative continues to support vulnerable women, particularly from female-headed households, in improving their livelihoods, income generation, and participation in local markets. A total of 300 women have received practical training to improve their knowledge in small business management and production of dairy products, for which there is a strong local market.
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IMAGES	 Photo : MEED Afghanistan  Photo: MEED Afghanistan
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACTIVITIES

Leaveraging the 2024 project model, MEED expanded its livelihoods interventions in 2025 based on updated needs assessments and market analysis, which confirmed both a strong interest in income-generating opportunities among vulnerable women, a good demand for processed dairy products in local markets. In response, four additional centers were established to engage and additional 240 women from marginalized communities with the potential and willingness to participate in economic activities. The activities included a three-month training programme on dairy processing techniques, along with basic business and financial management training. Participants received basic equipment to enable them to continue working together to collect milk and produce cream, yoghurt, butter and cheese for sale in local markets. Trainees were linked with community members producing milk to ensure reliable supply of raw materials and also with urban retailers to ensure access to and reliable market outlets.

LESSONS

Given the restrictions on women's participation in socio-economic activities, exploring alternative livelihood opportunities such as localized, culturally appropriate, and home-based enterprises remains critical for women's economic inclusion. Moving from individual businesses to women's cooperatives has strengthened sustainability, enabling women to pool resources, jointly manage activities, and receive equipment support at the cooperative level. Providing small grants was important to establish a foundation for purchasing raw materials and essential inputs to initiate production. Engaging with the Department of Commerce, which has shown interest in promoting economic opportunities for women, has been key to facilitate access and navigate complex regulatory requirements, allowing the women to work without interference from the authorities..

EVIDENCE

300 vulnerable women, including many female-headed households in North-Eastern part of Afghanistan, were supported through dairy processing centers to strengthen livelihoods and economic empowerment. During a three-month programme, participants received training in dairy processing, hygiene, quality control, entrepreneurship, and market access. They learned to produce cream, butter, yogurt, strained yogurt, and cheese, processing 25–30 kg of milk per group daily. Surplus products were sold in local markets, generating an average daily income of 600–800 AFN. Mission East provided trainers, operational support, market linkages, dairy processing toolkits, and ongoing technical guidance. The project to continue and expanded, enhanced women's skills, confidence, and financial independence, strengthened household resilience, and increased support for women's engagement.

DOMAINS

Development strategy priorities:

Creating hope

Changes in the lives of people facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability

X

Changes in laws, policies and practices that affect people's rights

X

Changes in the capacity of organisations and communities to support rights

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Changes in partnerships and collaborations that support people's rights

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Changes in participation of groups facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability

X

Changes in local leadership of development and humanitarian work

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