



Creating Income Generating Opportunities for Mine Survivors

At the request of Switzerland, Co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration and Secretary-General of the Seventh Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention (7MSP), the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) was asked to identify a project that would benefit mine survivors but at the same time provide delegates to the 7MSP with a permanent reminder of the meeting.

In response to this request, in April 2006 during a *process support* visit to Afghanistan, Sayad Baboo, a carpet weaver and mine survivor, was tasked with producing 600 handmade carpets for delegates to the 7MSP. The carpet is not only a symbol of the AP Mine Ban Convention but is an example of an income generation project that has benefited 29 people from four families. The families live in Kalakan, about 60 kilometres north of Kabul, Afghanistan. The area was a front line in the fighting between the Taliban and Northern Alliance. Their houses still bear the scars of the fighting. The men used to earn their income from farming but since the destruction of the land during the fighting and the drought this is no longer possible. The rough terrain also makes it difficult to farm when you are an amputee.



Sayad Baboo (41) and his wife Qaisi (30) have 3 sons and 3 daughters – Sayed Mutiullah (17), Masturah (14), Sayed Naqibullah (11), Sayed Hedayatullah (7), Tamanah (5), and Khalidah (1). Sayed Naqibullah has a dream to finish school and become a doctor, but his family just laugh at him. How can a poor boy ever go to University? In 1991, Sayed Baboo stood on a landmine near his home and lost his right leg below the knee. Sayed Mutiullah is very sick with jaundice. He must travel to

Kabul to get the medical assistance he needs as the local health clinic does not have the facilities to treat his illness. So far, the family has

spent US\$45 for medicines – more than they can afford on their limited income.

Even though the children are also skilled weavers, the task was too big for one family, so Sayad Baboo enlisted the help of three friends, also with disabilities.

Sayed Maqsud (50) and his wife, Natisah (35), have 2 sons and 5 daughters – Sayad Ali (17), Sayed Mahmud (12), Maryam (19), Rahimah (15), Waliyah (13), Basirah (11), and Sayedah (4). Only the boys go to school. In 1990, Sayed Maqsud lost his right leg above the knee in an industrial accident while a refugee in Iran.



Mohamed Salim (50) and wife, Shahidah (40), have 2 sons and 2 daughters aged 17 to 24. The family also run a small shop in their village. Mohamed Salim stood on a landmine in his garden in the early 1980s and lost his leg.

The fourth family is Khan Agha, his wife Ghal, and four children – Sazina (15), Fayaz (14), Hassan (12), and Lagawart (10). Khan Agha is a war victim who lost part of his left leg. The family lives below the poverty line with an average monthly income of around 8,000 Afghanis (about US\$160).

This carpet weaving project has given the families much needed income over the past 5 months. But now the work has stopped and the families are again in need of opportunities to feed and support themselves.

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For more information, or if you are interested in ordering a personalised handmade carpet for your office or home, please contact Sheree Bailey at s.bailey@gichd.ch