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# SUCCESS STORY

## “Sharvand” Encourages Local Residents to Get Involved



*Mr. Abduahadov stands outside a typical apartment block in Kulob. Many of these buildings fell into disrepair after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the brutal civil war that followed.*

Kulob-resident Hojji Safol Abduahadov has taken to his new role as head of the city’s new housing associations with great enthusiasm. Housing Associations (HA) have been set up in the city as a result of EFCA-Tajikistan’s Good Governance Initiative Fund project, sponsored by USAID. EFCA-Tajikistan has worked with a Kulob-based organisation, Civil Society Support Center ‘Shahrvand’, to set up these housing associations, which encourage residents of apartment blocks to take responsibility for the upkeep and management of their buildings.



Soviet-era apartment blocks are a key feature of most cities in Tajikistan. In Kulob, a city in the south of the country, many of these buildings fell into disrepair after the breakup of the Soviet Union and the brutal civil war which took place during the 1990s.

Now, Mr Abduahadov is coordinating the chairpersons of over 30 housing associations which have been set up in the city. These associations have solved some key problems with the sewage systems, gas pipes and basements of their buildings, and have also begun to think of small but significant projects to improve the lives of residents.

One association has constructed a playground for children, while another has renovated an outdoor cooking space next to the building. Another HA has bought several sets of plastic chairs and tables, which can be rented by their local communities for funerals, weddings and other events, which traditionally require large numbers of people to come and sit outside the apartment buildings. A recent purchase by the association, two enormous pans for cooking osh (a traditional celebratory dish), are waiting to be used once the wedding season begins.

“If these housing associations can become more financially sustainable and make some money besides their funds gathered by residents, they will be able to do even more for their communities”, says Mr. Abduahadov.



*“The residents know what is best for themselves and what their communities need, and housing associations allow them to improve their own living spaces.”*

*- Hojji Safol Abduahadov, head of housing associations in Kulob*

The local government in Kulob has taken notice of the housing associations and in 2017 handed over responsibility for building maintenance to the existing housing associations, pledging 340,000 Tajikistani Somoni (around \$38,360) to the project. EFCA-Tajikistan and Civil Society Support Center ‘Shahrvand’s project is allowing local citizens to take responsibility for their living environments and get involved.



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