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**TAJIKISTAN**

# CASE STUDY

## Modernizing City Planning in Tajikistan

### Architect applies U.S. quality and safety standards to benefit his community



Photo: American Councils / Community Connection

Gani Hakimov, alumnus of a USAID study tour, at the gas station he designed and built in Zafarobod.

***A U.S. study tour, organized by USAID helped introduce new city planning standards in Tajikistan.***

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### Challenge

Cities across Tajikistan are experiencing large population growth due to the influx of refugees from Afghanistan and internal labor migrants. Additionally, urban development has been encouraged by the inflow of funds from labor migrants working abroad. City planning, on the other hand, is still based on the plans developed during the Soviet period. It has not been adjusted for the changing population numbers, much higher use of privately-owned transportation, changing industries, and other factors that have arisen since the early '90s. As a result, city growth has been plagued by multiple problems for which the cities had neither the knowledge nor the skills to tackle.

### Initiative

In July 2008, USAID organized a study tour for 10 Tajik specialists to the United States to expand their knowledge on city planning. The tour aimed to acquaint the Tajik experts with the key approaches to city planning in the United States, such as the considerations on aesthetics, safety, transportation, and environment. Participants also had an opportunity to learn how the citizens are involved in the planning process and studied how the responsibilities are divided among interested parties. One of the specialists who took part in the tour was Gani Hakimov, the Chief Architect of the District Administration in Zafarobod, a small but rapidly-growing town in the remote northern part of Tajikistan. Hakimov came back full of ideas he felt would be readily applicable in his city.

### Results

Using American construction safety and quality standards, Hakimov has already designed and supervised the construction of several buildings in Zafarobod District. One of these buildings, a bright blue gas station, stands out from other structures in town for more than its vibrant color. Hakimov has made sure that the station stands away from populated areas along a major road which makes it both safer for the community and more accessible to the drivers. Following the U.S. model, the station includes a convenience store, an auto-repair facility, and showcases new technologies to the region. Unlike most gas stations in the area, where employees manually pour gas into cars, this new station uses automated pumps, making it much safer both environmentally and for employees and customers, while increasing efficiency.

Hakimov is now planning to design the first private medical clinic in the district. He is also actively sharing these and other U.S. best practices with local officials so that not only his city but all the cities across Tajikistan can be safer and friendlier to their residents.