



Aga Khan Agency for Habitat

Aga Khan Agency for Habitat and UK partners train female rescuers in Tajikistan and Afghanistan



Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 2 April 2019 – The Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH), in collaboration with Eastern Alliance for Safe and Sustainable Transport (EASST), Staffordshire Emergency Services Humanitarian Aid Association (SESHAA), Women in the Fire Service (WFS) of United Kingdom and British Embassy in Tajikistan organised a search and rescue training for 16 female participants in an effort to build capacity for disaster preparedness and response operations in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The partnership follows the signing of an agreement for the expansion of cross-border cooperation for disaster preparedness and response to emergency.

From the onset of its interventions in Tajikistan, the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH) has aligned closely with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, Goal 5 –Gender Equality) and Tajikistan’s National Strategy in the field of humanitarian assistance and Disaster Risk Reduction, ensuring that gender equality is an integral part of its activities.

AKAH places emphasis on engaging women and children to its disaster and awareness and preparedness trainings, given they are the most vulnerable groups when it comes to disasters. Today, female members are actively involved in the search and rescue operations, together with their male counterparts across the region.

FIRE AID, a UK-based umbrella organisation under which the key UK project partners EASST, SESHAA and WFS collaborate, generously donated vital equipment worth US\$ 40,000 for the training. The shipment of this equipment was arranged through the long-standing partnership between EASST and the Aga Khan Development Network.

The training, delivered by UK fire fighters and rescue experts, enabled participants to learn in depth search and rescue strategies and techniques, and methods of search and rescue operations using special rescue and personal protective equipment.

Marhabo Saboieva, Tajikistan SART member, shared her experience noting: “The training enabled us to not only learn and practice main operations related to search and rescue, but also provided a space where all female rescuers from Tajikistan and Afghanistan shared their work experience. I have realised more the importance of female rescuers during emergencies as many families in Tajikistan, due to some cultural sensitivity in relation to gender issues, prefer female rescuers over male ones to help their female members”.

Suhaylo Nazari, Afghanistan SART member, stated: “The training was a great opportunity to strengthen the regional cooperation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan in disaster preparedness and response”. The techniques and methods learnt from professional instructors,

according to Suhaylo, will be shared with other members of her team once she is back in Afghanistan.

NOTES:

The *Aga Khan Agency for Habitat* (AKAH), which merges the capabilities of Focus Humanitarian Assistance, the Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, and the Aga Khan Development Network's Disaster Risk Management Initiative, focuses on preparing for both sudden and slow-onset disasters. AKAH works to ensure that people live in physical settings that are as safe as possible from the effects of natural disasters; that residents who do live in high-risk areas are able to cope with disasters in terms of preparedness and response; and that these settings provide access to social and financial services that lead to greater opportunity and a better quality of life. Initially, priority areas of AKAH will include Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and India. Read more about the agency at: <http://www.akdn.org/our-agencies/aga-khan-agency-habitat>

FIRE AID and International Development is a UK-based charity, which brings together its members to deliver equipment and training to emergency services around the world. FIRE AID delivers high-quality expert training by its members, who volunteer their services to improve rescue capacity in countries facing the greatest challenges. This project brings together three key FIRE AID members: the [Eastern Alliance for Safe and Sustainable Transport \(EASST\)](#), [Staffordshire Emergency Services Humanitarian Aid Association \(SESHAA\)](#) and [Women in the Fire Service \(WFS\)](#).

The *UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office* (FCO) works at home and overseas to safeguard Britain's national security and build Britain's prosperity, as well as support British citizens overseas. This is done through a skilled team of over 12,500 people in over 270 diplomatic offices, approximately 8,000 of whom are local staff employed within the 168 countries in which FCO operates.

The *British Embassy in Tajikistan* maintains and develops bilateral diplomatic relations between the UK and the Republic of Tajikistan covering a range of issues including political and economic reform. The British Embassy has been supporting the joint project with Fire Aid aimed at helping Tajikistan's Committee for Emergency Situations build capacity in terms of coping with natural disasters, responding effectively to crisis situations and improving efficiency of rescuing & firefighting operations.

For further information, please contact:

subhiya.mamadzamirova@akdn.org

Read online: <https://www.akdn.org/press-release/aga-khan-agency-habitat-and-uk-partners-train-female-rescuers-tajikistan-and>