



SUCCESS STORY

Falling Leaves Raise Benefits for the City

With USAID support, a city recycles organic waste



*Kulob residents are using the recycled leaves to improve soil in their gardens.
Photo: Urban Institute*

Community residents benefit from compost made with help from USAID's local governance project in Tajikistan, as part of the goal to reduce, recycle and reuse solid waste.

Until recently, Tillo Boboev, Director of the Kulob City Botanical Garden, was frustrated that the leaves and organic matter produced by the city are not being utilized. With training and financial assistance from USAID, this specialist was able to turn this waste matter into rich compost.

As in many places in Tajikistan, the City of Kulob (population 83,000), Khatlon region, struggled with rising volumes of garbage. Although the city landfill has sufficient capacity to handle the amount of waste the city produces, insufficient financing and irregular collection mean that garbage is not always taken away and becomes a threat to public health. Mr. Boboev was certain that there should be a way to recycle the leaves and organic matter to reduce the amount of waste in the landfill and benefit the community.

The solution on how to address this issue was suggested at a training course on appropriate technology in solid waste management, held by USAID's Local Governance and Citizen Participation Project. Using the ideas he learned at this training course, Mr. Boboev designed a proposal for composting project and approached USAID and the local municipality for support in implementing it. By April 2008, Mr. Boboev was able to secure technical expertise and a \$2200 grant from the USAID project, a \$500 contribution from the Botanical Garden, and equipment and labor from Kulob's own municipal services department to launch his recycling project.

Under Mr. Boboev's supervision, wagons hauled 20 metric tons of dry leaves and other organic waste from various neighborhoods to the Botanical Garden, where composting commenced. In parallel, USAID helped conduct public education on the benefits of compost in family kitchen gardens.

Within the first month since its commencement, Boboev's project reduced solid waste taken to the city's landfill by 10 percent and produced 15 tons of rich compost. The Botanical Gardens kept 6 tons of this compost for its own use, donated 1 ton to the city, and offered the remaining 8 tons for public sale. Sales have already topped \$800, the revenue shared by the garden and the local government of Kulob. "By giving training and technical support, USAID helped us solve a problem and create benefits for the community," says Mr. Boboev, who hopes that other cities will use his model to recycle waste as well. Boosted by increased public participation, Mr. Boboev is ramping up compost production to 50 tons.