

AKTC is engaged in a town planning initiative in Khorog with a view towards sustainable development of communities in the city and heritage preservation.



#### Partners

Act Central Asia  
Ministry of Culture, Republic of Tajikistan  
Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage  
Smithsonian Folkways Recordings  
The Silk Road Project, Inc.  
University of Central Asia  
WOMEX (World Music Expo)  
World Music Institute  
Zamzama Productions

#### For further information

Aga Khan Development Network,  
Switzerland  
1-3 Avenue de la Paix  
1202 Geneva, Switzerland  
Tel: +41 22 909 7200  
Fax: +41 22 909 7292  
Email: aktc@akdn.org

Aga Khan Development Network, Tajikistan  
8-10 Gani Abdullo Street  
734003 Dushanbe  
Tajikistan  
Tel: +992 37 2246500/2246508  
Fax: +992 37 2510066  
Website: www.akdn.org

The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) is a group of private development agencies working to empower communities and individuals, often in disadvantaged circumstances, to improve living conditions and opportunities, especially in Africa and Asia. Its agencies work in over 30 countries for the common good of all citizens, regardless of their gender, origin or religion. Its underlying impulse is the ethic of compassion for the vulnerable in society.

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## TAJIKISTAN



### Aga Khan Trust for Culture

*For centuries, Central Asia has been home to a mix of diverse cultures, societies and traditions. The Soviet era witnessed great leaps in education in the region and the emergence of a literate society immersed in the rich fabric of the period's literature, arts and culture.*

*Since independence, Central Asian states have begun to reassert their identities, drawing upon the indigenous culture that had often been overlooked during the previous era. The Aga Khan Trust of Culture (AKTC) is supporting the revival of Central Asia's cultural history through research and active programming in order to foster tolerance, appreciation and preservation of this vital heritage both within the country and abroad.*

*Through its programmes in Tajikistan, AKTC is helping preserve, develop and promote local musical traditions, is*

*rehabilitating Khorog City Park and is beginning a participatory urban planning initiative in Khorog.*

#### Aga Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia

Among the traditional arts of Central Asia, music occupies a unique place, for it has been at once a means of expressing social identity; preserving spiritual practices and beliefs; and transmitting history, philosophy and ethics.

The Aga Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia (AKMICA), a programme of AKTC, strives to recognise the value of this musical heritage. Its core mission includes reinforcing the role of music, helping assure the transmission of skills, knowledge and experience from one generation to the next, raising the profile of traditional music in other parts of the globe and nurturing collaborations

among artists from different parts of Central Eurasia and beyond.

#### Tradition-Bearers Programme

The Music Initiative supports master-musicians, or *ustâds*, who have demonstrated a commitment to the survival of their national heritage by taking on teaching positions in music centres, schools and other networks encouraging collegiality, creativity and communication.

The Academy of Maqâm in Dushanbe, one of centres supported by AKMICA, offers comprehensive training to highly qualified students in historical, theoretical and practical elements of the classical Tajik-Uzbek music of Shashmaqâm. Currently, eight graduate students are enrolled in an intensive, four-year course of study and another six have completed a portion of this program and remain professionally

With comprehensive support from AKMICA, Tajikistan's Academy of Maqâm released their recording of Maqâm-i Râst. The CD was nominated in 2006 for an American Grammy Award in the category of "Best Traditional World Music Album."



To date, some 3,000 students and master musicians have benefited from the Aga Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia's Tradition-Bearers Programme through its support of ustâd-shâgird (master-apprentice) centres and teacher training seminars.

These activities encompass rigorous training for a new generation of elite performers and master musicians and programmes that build a future audience base for traditional music by cultivating an appreciation of it among secondary school students.

Since 2002, the Music Initiative's Touring Programme has also attracted some 1.5 million spectators worldwide and introduced a new audience to the musical traditions of Central Asia.

involved in performing and teaching Tajik classical music.

The Khunar ("Talent") Centre, operating with a multi-year grant from the Music Initiative, sponsors *ustâd-shâgird* (master-apprentice) programs in four cities of northern Tajikistan: Khujand, Istaravshan, Isfara and Penjikent. The Centre accepts children from 11 to 16 years of age, including some 200 students in 2007. In addition to offering lessons with its 30 teachers, it sponsors frequent concerts, prepares cassettes and CDs for its students and publishes music method books.

Many Khunar Centre teachers are pensioners with limited income and have found the opportunity to teach young people an economic and social boon. Future projects for the Centre include creating a musical instrument workshop to train luthiers and expanding the *ustâd-shâgird* programme to other towns in northern Tajikistan.

#### Documentation and Dissemination Programme

The Music Initiative is currently producing *Music of Central Asia*, a ten-volume CD and DVD anthology of Central Asian musical traditions, in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. By the end of 2007, six volumes of the series had been released.

As part of the series, Tajikistan's Academy of Maqâm released "Invisible Face of the Beloved," a recording of Maqâm-i Râst, one of the six song cycles that comprise the *Shashmaqâm*.

The CD was subsequently nominated in 2006 for a Grammy Award—considered the American music industry's highest honour—in the category of "Best Traditional World Music Album."

#### Performance and Outreach Programme

AKMICA's Performance and Outreach Programme presents leading exponents of Central Asian musical traditions to international audiences in an effort to stimulate interest and increase knowledge of Central Asian culture around the world. AKMICA uses its curatorial expertise to select outstanding performers, develop innovative concert productions and organise worldwide concert tours including educational outreach activities and workshops.

AKMICA's 2007 ten-city concert tour of the USA included seven musicians from Tajikistan. During the month-long tour, some 10,500 audience members attended concerts, lecture-demonstrations, workshops and film showings in venues that ranged from the assembly room of a New York City elementary school to the esteemed Carnegie Hall.

Overall, through the activities of the Music Initiative, local musicians have gained prestige in their home communities, secured their economic well-being and are serving as models of a viable career in music for aspiring students. At the same time, Western audiences have been exposed to the finest contemporary representatives of Central Asian musical arts. As its activities grow, the Music Initiative

intends to maintain the mutually reinforcing relationship between its principal areas of activity and to continue assuring the transmission of musical traditions that link Central Asians to their history and heritage, thus contributing to the cultural revitalisation mission of AKTC.

#### Khorog Park

Through its Historic Cities Programme, AKTC has been rehabilitating the city park of Khorog, a town with a population of 25,000 and the administrative and economic capital of the mountainous Gorno-Badakhshan region in Tajikistan.

The park was gifted to His Highness the Aga Khan on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of his Imamate in 1997. It is situated in the city centre of Khorog, along the banks of the Gunt River that flow through the town. The park is protected from the river waters by stone dykes, one of which also serves as a picturesque pedestrian pathway.

Since 2003, the Trust has been rehabilitating the park as part of an effort to offer the city a communal space in which to hold functions and to reflect, relax and enjoy nature. While additional green spaces can be found scattered throughout the city, they are limited to private use.

With the park's city theatre, two entrance areas and location along a riverbank, it is an urban green space well-integrated with the city network. Its revival will

represent a substantial step towards the revitalisation of the city as a whole.

The first phase of park construction was completed in 2007 and involved approximately 90 local workers; further work is continuing and is expected to be complete in 2009.

#### Khorog Town Planning Initiative

AKTC is also sponsoring a town planning initiative in Khorog with the aim of sustainable community development and heritage preservation. The town has increasingly become subject to urbanization pressures as economic development projects come to the region and post-independence social trends emerge.

The initiative began activities in 2007 with views towards understanding the cultural, economic, demographic, administrative and other factors currently shaping the town's growth and to anticipate the demands that will accompany future developments. Such developments include the advent of international tourism, the establishment of a campus of the University of Central Asia in Khorog and increased linkages with neighbouring countries, such as bordering Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan and China.

The project will continue to work with local and regional governments to build effective planning institutions and to engage the community in participatory pilot projects.

*"From Afghanistan to Zanzibar, from India to Mali, the [Aga Khan Trust for Culture's] support to historic communities demonstrates how conservation and revitalisation of the cultural heritage—in many cases the only asset at the disposal of the community—can provide a springboard for social development. We have also seen how such projects can have a positive impact well beyond conservation, promoting good governance, the growth of civil society, a rise in incomes and economic opportunities, greater respect for human rights and better stewardship of the environment."*

*We have also seen how the preservation and promotion of other forms of heritage, such as traditional music, play an important role in supporting and validating traditional culture in the face of a homogenising world. This is important because culture remains a source of personal pride. It still has the power to inspire and unify an entire nation. And it can reveal that nation, at its best, to the outside world."*

—His Highness the Aga Khan



All of the designs of Khorog Park and, when possible, the materials, are local in origin in an effort to provide harmony with local surroundings. To the left, workers lay out stones in a chevron pattern.

**Cover Photo:** The Academy of Maqâm offers comprehensive training to qualified students in historical, theoretical and practical elements of the classical Tajik-Uzbek music of *Shashmaqâm*.