UCA
UNIVERSITY
OF CENTRAL ASIA

ANNUAL
REPORT 2019
TAJIKISTAN | KYRGYZSTAN | KAZAKHSTAN

About UCA

The University of Central Asia (UCA) was founded in 2000 as a private, not for profit, secular university through an International Treaty signed by the Presidents of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, and His Highness the Aga Khan; ratified by their respective parliaments and registered with the United Nations. The Presidents are the Patrons of the University, and His Highness is the Chancellor. UCA's mission is to promote the social and economic development of Central Asia, particularly its mountain communities, by offering an internationally recognised standard of higher education, and enabling the peoples of the region to preserve their rich cultural heritage as assets for the future. UCA brings with it the broader commitment and partnership of the Aga Khan Development Network.

For more information: www.ucentralasia.org

▲   Communications and Media programme students hone their
media production skills at UCA's state-of-the-art media lab at the Naryn campus.
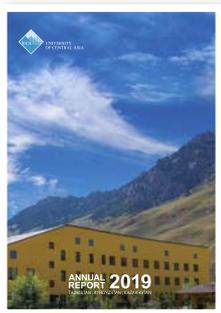
The mountains provide a picturesque backdrop to UCA's Naryn campus.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN
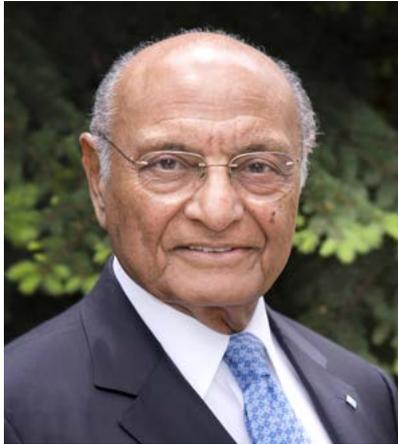
In a year of change and increased uncertainty, the myriad challenges facing Central Asia, and particularly the development of its mountain societies, are larger and more complex than ever. These challenges call for the attention of the best minds, the best tools, and the best support from across many disciplines and partner organisations working together. As the only regional institution of higher education, the University of Central Asia (UCA) is one of a few institutions positioned uniquely to conduct research to find solutions to these challenges for mountain societies.

Guided by the vision of the Chancellor, His Highness the Aga Khan and the Patrons who are Presidents of the Founding States of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, UCA is governed by a Board of Trustees whose membership includes eminent academics, civil society leaders and business persons from Central Asia and beyond. This year it was strengthened with the addition of the representative of the Government of Tajikistan, Dr. Lutfiya Abdulkholiqzoda, Head of the Department of Science and Education of the President's Office. Meeting three times this year with the Chancellor, the Board guided management on how best UCA could address the challenges of education and development of mountain societies. The Trustees reiterated that foremost among UCA's priorities was its effort to become a high quality research university and requested the Rector and faculty members to develop a road map for this objective. Recruitment this year of a number of senior faculty members therefore bodes well for this objective. In between Board meetings, Trustees provide guidance and oversight through its three Committees which met 14 times this year through remote conferencing.

Among key decisions taken by the Board in 2019 were to start the School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) programme in Kabul (Afghanistan) and Bokhtar (Tajikistan) and to build additional dormitories funded by the AKDN to accommodate 110 additional students at the Naryn and Khorog campuses by Fall 2020, raising the total capacity to 410. The Board also approved the audited accounts of UCA for the year ended 31 December 2019.

Construction of the third residential campus of UCA in Tekeli, Kazakhstan is pending Government approval of

the one remaining fiscal benefit under UCA's International Treaty. Meanwhile the University was encouraged by the visit to the SPCE and UCA campus sites in Tekeli by a delegation of Kazakh senators led by UCA Trustee Senator Byrganym Aitimova, who confirmed their strong support for an early resolution of this issue.

This past year, the University also made progress on nurturing potential supporters and donors in Central Asia. Awareness presentations and greater involvement of this donor segment with UCA commenced in early 2019. They are beginning to bear fruit with the first gift of US$10K followed by a major gift of US$100K from Central Asian donors and many potential supporters are in various stages of cultivation.

The achievements and initiatives described in these pages are a tribute to the vision and support of the Founders; the wisdom of its Board of Trustees; the dedication of its faculty and staff; the cooperation of its many academic and funding partners as well as the agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network; and the devotion of its many volunteers and supporters. On the behalf of the Board of Trustees I extend our warmest appreciation to them all.

Dr. Shamsh Kassim-Lakha
Chairman, Board of Trustees

MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR

Building on the progress achieved in 2018 by the University of Central Asia, much of the focus in 2019 was on streamlining the operational and academic framework of the University. This included curriculum development to align with national requirements, introduction of SAP Enterprise Resource Planning software, institutional policies, governance management systems, and re-engineering business processes to ensure alignment with international best practices. In addition, there was renewed emphasis on encouraging faculty to conduct research on issues relevant to Central Asia with the objective of positioning UCA as a regional research university.

It was anticipated that such an ambitious agenda would not be completed within the course of only one year, especially since key personnel to manage and operate these systems were also being hired during the same period. What is heartening to see is that the faculty and staff of UCA have risen to the challenge of Change for Excellence and significant progress was achieved during the course of 2019.

As UCA and its three Schools mature, a key question to carefully consider is the culture we wish to establish at the School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE), School of Arts and Sciences (SAS), and the Graduate School of Development (GSD). This comprises the amalgamation of attitudes and internal value systems, as well as how the institution pursues the attainment of its vision. UCA seeks a culture that will embody our institutional value system, preparing students to excel and become leaders in the world they will enter after graduation. It also involves encouraging the faculty and providing an environment to excel in teaching and research by building systems and processes.

A significant achievement this year was the recruitment of a cohort of faculty for each undergraduate major which has altered significantly the intellectual environment and campus experience as evidenced in the annual survey of student satisfaction on the Khorog and Naryn campuses. Another achievement was the finalisation of the curriculum for each major that incorporated UCA's liberal arts core vision with the requirements of each Founding State.

Within GSD, in response to the Government of Afghanistan's request for training of mid-level civil servants, the Institute of Public Policy and Administration successfully concluded the Executive Masters in Economic Policy programme for the first cohort of students and enrolled the second batch of students, for which there was significantly more demand. The Mountain Societies Research Institute completed the shift of its head office to Khorog, while still maintaining a smaller presence in Bishkek, and hired key personnel to expand its research programmes and support the Earth and Environmental Sciences degree programme at the SAS Campus in Khorog.

The University has had a productive year. There is, of course, more to be done. Critical work in 2020 will include continued focus on the faculty and student experience, enhancement in the quality of teaching and learning, and further work on ensuring that the values UCA espouses are lived out in our day-to-day interactions.

I hope you enjoy learning more through these pages about the University's major initiatives and accomplishments in 2019, and I extend my deepest appreciation to the ongoing and absolutely vital support and commitment of our faculty, staff, students, donors, and partners, for the objectives and programmes of the University of Central Asia.

Prof. Dr. S. Sohail H. Naqvi
Rector, University of Central Asia

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

UCA's School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) provides high quality undergraduate education in the liberal arts and sciences in a fully residential setting. Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts degrees are offered in Computer Science, and Communications and Media, at the Naryn (Kyrgyzstan) campus; and Economics, and Earth and Environmental Sciences, at the Khorog (Tajikistan) campus. The Tekeli (Kazakhstan) campus is in the planning stages and will offer Business Management and Engineering Sciences.

Dormitory buildings of UCA Campus in Khorog. Photo credit: Marina Blinova

Undergraduate Programme

SAS admitted its fourth cohort of 72 students in September 2019 to form the Class of 2024. Nine students who met the required admissions tests score, directly joined the freshmen year without having to study a year in the preparatory programme. UCA students represent nine countries including Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Russia and Kenya.

Cooperative Education Programme

In 2019, over 160 students were employed as interns in 182 positions across Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and six international placements in Prague, Tokyo, Los Angeles (2), Turkey, and Canada. Some of the students completed two placements, and 22 students worked remotely online. UCA faculty were actively involved in finding internship positions related to students' majors, which provided opportunities for them to gain new skills and knowledge in different areas. Students had placements in fields such as communications and marketing, monitoring and evaluation, business, finance, information technology, geographic information systems, project management, research, human resources and education.

Broadening Horizons

UCA aims to support and provide students with opportunities to have global experiences and build networks, increasing their intellectual capacity through exchange programmes, international conferences, tournaments and summer programmes. In 2019, students participated in international events across 10 countries including the United States, United Kingdom, Norway, South Africa, Thailand, Russia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Pakistan.

▲ Undergraduate students practice flying drones in Naryn during a field trip as part of their Connecting to Your Discipline Programme. They were assisted by Kamil Karamali (3rd from left), News Reporter from Global News, and Farhan Umedaly (2nd from right), of VoVo Productions, both from Canada.

Six students participated in the World Universities Debate Championships in Cape Town (South Africa) and Bangkok (Thailand), and sixteen students participated in an International Model United Nations in Tashkent (Uzbekistan). Four students were awarded scholarships to attend the International Summer Programme at the University of Cambridge in July 2019.

Other programmes included:
- "Migration – World Puzzle" International Student Festival in Trondheim (Norway)
- Iacocca Institute Global Village for Future Leaders at Lehigh University in Bethlehem PA (USA)
- Imperial International Model United Nations in Tashkent (Uzbekistan)
- Model Organisation for Islamic Cooperation Conference in Kazan (Russia)
- United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia Academy Conference in Almaty (Kazakhstan)
- Aga Khan Humanities Project Debate Tournaments in Dushanbe (Tajikistan)
- Lahore University of Management Sciences Model United Nations Conference in Lahore (Pakistan)
- Fight Like a Girl Anti-Discrimination Camp in Issyk-Kul (Kyrgyzstan)
- Adventure of Science: Women on Ice Conference in Bishkek
- Water Security Symposium in Bishkek
- Learning Landscapes Through Environmental Research and Monitoring Conference in Naryn

Faculty Development

In September 2019, 19 new full-time faculty and visiting faculty were recruited to teach at the Naryn and Khorog campuses, with a total of 51 faculty members representing sixteen countries. Twenty-five faculty are from Central Asia (49%), four from South Asia, four from Europe, eight from North America, five from Australia, and five from other countries, including Azerbaijan, New Zealand, Iran, Tunisia and Philippines.

UCA also hosted eighteen visiting faculty members to teach liberal arts courses, Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Russian languages, as well as Earth and Environmental Sciences courses, including a Fulbright scholar, **Dr. David W. Rodgers** from Idaho University (USA), and **Peter Marty** from Zurich University of Applied Sciences (Switzerland).

Teaching and Learning

Various on-campus initiatives were launched to provide student support, and contribute to faculty professional development.

- A *writing centre* was launched at the Khorog Campus by **Dr. Genevieve Balderston**, Assistant Professor in English for Academic Purposes, and **Jakub Polansky**, Visiting Doctoral Researcher and Senior Teaching Assistant of Economics. It provides individualised and small group tutoring, writing instruction, and guidance on personal statements, cover letters, and summer programme applications. Several workshops were offered during the Autumn semester in collaboration with the campus librarian, covering writing annotated bibliographies, searching for library resources, citations and referencing, as well as plagiarism prevention.

- A *Teaching Triangles* professional development initiative was introduced in the 2018-2019 academic year to observe peer teaching, and is now a mandatory programme for all faculty. Groups of three faculty members work together to set individual and group goals to learn, reflect, and improve their teaching.

- **Dr. Murodbek Laldjebaev**, Assistant Professor of Earth and Environmental Science, and Robin Higgins, UCA Counsellor, initiated a joint teaching and research project on *The Neuro-Science of Well-Being and Personal Purpose*. The project offered 10 freshmen students an 8-session course launched in Autumn 2018, that introduced students to the brain science behind concepts such as goal setting, sleep, exercise, productivity, and habit tracking. Students increased their self-awareness, gained new habits to increase their productivity, and developed personal success maps to track their progress. In April 2019, students shared their stories with UCA faculty and staff, and attributed part of their improvement to the techniques and strategies learnt through participation in this project.

Professional Development

UCA launched a Post Graduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE) programme for 18 faculty members, including faculty from Naryn and Khorog State Universities, as well as UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) in Naryn and Khorog. It was delivered by the University of Cambridge's Faculty of Education and will continue in 2020. PGCHE training is part of UCA's wider faculty development programme and is central to promoting academic excellence and innovation.

Several other professional development sessions were held in 2019, including a week-long workshop in Khorog by **Dr. Stephen Lezak,** from the University of Oxford's School of Geography and the Environment, covering the development of pedagogy and research skills. **Dr. Sultonbek Aksakolov** also attended a 3-day seminar organised by the International Baccalaureate Organisation in Cardiff (UK), to develop a new curriculum and diploma programme on Tajik Literature.

Student Profile

277
students across both campuses

♂ **48%** ♀ **52%**

30%
from Urban Centres

70%
from Small Towns and Rural Areas

82%
from Central Asian Countries

18%
Regional and International Countries

Research

All faculty members are engaged in research in their own disciplines, and many are working on collaborative projects with UCA's research institutes. They have produced a number of publications in 2019, including articles in indexed peer reviewed journals, conference proceedings, and conference presentation papers. They also provided support to in-service and pre-service teacher training as part of their community service initiatives, and are working with local schools, Khorog State University, Naryn State University, UCA's Education Improvement Programme, and the Aga Khan Education Services.

Two papers were presented at the Aga Khan University's Teaching and Learning Conference, and the paper co-authored by **Dr. Murodbek Laldjebaev**, Assistant Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences, and **Robin Higgins**, University Counsellor, on "Improving Student Wellbeing at the University of Central Asia", was awarded the 3rd Best Paper Presentation.

Students have also started engaging in research, including, **Saher Naz Janani,** Communications and Media student, who published a paper in the Global Media Journal (Indian Edition, Volume 11) in December 2019 on the "Changing Media Studies Curriculum To 'De-Colonize' Minds of Asian Media Professionals."

Community Outreach

Students in Khorog and Naryn implemented 34 projects serving their campus towns and nearby communities in 2019. Community service projects included academic and life skills projects, sports and cultural events, as well as activities on social welfare, environmental issues, gender equality, and women's empowerment. Students cooperated with local academic organisations, and non-governmental organisations, to strengthen the relationships built by UCA with the surrounding communities. Based on feedback, these programmes had a positive impact, and were lauded by community members.

In Khorog, students launched an educational project for the Rushon Orphanage in Tajikistan, delivering weekly educational, cultural, and social programmes to children. In cooperation with UCA's Counsellor, students also held sessions for teachers of the orphanage to learn about different approaches to work with adolescents, and the psychology of teenagers. Pupils at the orphanage welcomed UCA students at their school, and look to them as mentors.

A student-led Eco-Warriors club at the Naryn campus implemented various projects aimed at raising awareness about climate change, environmental issues, and the collective responsibility to protect the planet. Students organised community clean ups, collecting hundreds of kilograms of plastic, glass, paper and cardboard.

A considerable amount of food waste was also converted into fertilizer for trees and local flora.

UCA faculty also contributed to campus and local communities in Naryn and Khorog:

- **Tojiniso Olimnazarova,** Lecturer in English for Academic Purposes, established the Khorog English Teachers' Association (KETA) to support English teachers professionally by providing them opportunities to network with other English language professionals in Khorog. In 2019, six workshops on Communicative Language Teaching were conducted for 42 teachers. UCA is planning to establish an Association of Teachers of Tajikistan, and incorporate KETA as one of its members.

- **Shams Sharif,** Lecturer of History and Political Science, and **Dr. Kholiknazar Kuchakshoev,** Associate Professor of Mathematics, contributed to professional development workshops for English language teachers, organised by UCA's Education Improvement Programme for 20 English language teachers at the Khorog and Naryn campuses. Dr. Kuchakshoev also organised teacher training for Aga Khan Lycee secondary school math teachers in Khorog.

- **Rebekah Ramsay,** Senior Lecturer of History, provided support to UCA's Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit (CHHU), to facilitate the "Social Life of the Naryn-Syr Darya River" workshop at the Naryn campus in June. She also worked on a Naryn Oral histories project in Kyrgyzstan villages with **Lilit Dabagian,** Lecturer of Communications and Media.

Visitors on Campus

UCA welcomed over 11,500 visitors to its campuses in Naryn and Khorog in 2019. Of this total, over 3,000 people visited the Khorog campus during a two-day Open Doors event held for members of the community where students, faculty and staff conducted campus tours. UCA's student recruitment team also held an open house and parents day at the Naryn campus to introduce potential students, as well as parents of current students to the campus facilities, programmes, and student life activities.

Contributions of Visiting Faculty

The Communication and Media programme invited local and international experts to deliver a series of workshops and guest lectures in Naryn, contributing to a diverse and vibrant learning environment, and exposing students and faculty to different approaches to communication and media practices. Similar work has been done for the other majors.

Monica Attard, Head of the School of Journalism at the University of Technology Sydney, on *Multimedia Journalism*.

Venera Koichieva, Senior Producer and Broadcast Journalist at BBC Kyrgyz Service, on *Regional Reporting to Global Audiences.*

Dr. Elena Kolesova, Senior Lecturer and Consultant at the School of Communication, Journalism and Marketing at Massey University, on *Intercultural Communication.*

Dr. Yulia Kuvshinskaya, Associate Professor of the School of Linguistics at the Higher School of Economics, on *Russian Media.*

▲ Dr. Diana Pauna, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, briefing new faculty during on-boarding sessions at the Khorog Campus.

Dr. Usha Harris, Lecturer in the Department of Media, Music, Communications and Cultural Studies at Macquarie University on *Participatory Media and Environmental Communication.*

Dr. Elira Turdubaeva, Associate Professor in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications Department at American University of Central Asia, on *Central Asia Civil Society and Media Practices.*

Dr. Marcello Schellini, Professor of Photography and Design at VIT University Vellore in India, and photography researcher, on *Adobe Creative Cloud and Photography;*

Florina Vilgertshofer, Head of DOK.fest Perspectives in Munich, on *The Documentary Filmmaking Industry and Festivals.*

Chingiz Narynov, Independent Producer, on *Managing a Video Production Studio.*

Dr. David Leupold, Postdoctoral Research Fellow and Vice Chairman at NIDID NGO, on *The Ethnographic Approach in Interviewing.*

Nursultan Stanaliyev, Cameraman and Editor at Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, on *Adobe Premiere and TV Studio Production*.

SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

The School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) is a leading provider of post-secondary, short-cycle continuing education. SPCE offers certificate programmes in 13 learning centres in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Afghanistan, and provides professional and vocational qualifications to young learners, teenagers, and adults in a flexible format that boosts skills development, improves qualification for employment, job creation and educational mobility.

Programmes and Key Statistics

Founded in 2006, SPCE has enrolled nearly 150,000 students from learning centres across Central Asia and Afghanistan, of which women represent 53%. Among the most popular certificate programmes are Entrepreneurship, Vocational Training, Academic Achievement Programme (AAP) backed by Cambridge Assessment English standards, as well as Mental Math for children, Business Planning, and Accounting with the CAP/CIPA international certification. SPCE employs 190 full-time, and more than 100 part-time staff, 100% of whom are nationals of the countries where UCA has a presence.

In 2019, SPCE boosted annual enrollment to 19,967 students, including 635 students graduating from a newly launched centre in Bokhtar (Tajikistan). SPCE offered its courses to a record number of 5,519 learners in Afghanistan, reflecting a 51% increase over the previous year.

Five learning centres introduced two new components of the Cambridge Assessment English curriculum into its

▲ UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) Cambridge Assessment English centre signed an MOU with the Sapat International Educational Institution, which enables SPCE to deliver tests to Sapat school students and facilitate professional development to their teachers. From L to R: Salih Ilhan, Sapat Education Coordinator, Veli Chetin, Sapat Chief of Staff, Lidiya Chikalova, SPCE Planning and Reporting Officer; and Dr. Gulnara Dzunushalieva, SPCE Director.

Young Learners Programme (ages 7-12), and AAP programme (ages 12-18). Starting in January 2020, seven learning centres plan to target the corporate sector in launching a Cambridge Assessment Business certification.

Notable Achievements

SPCE delivered numerous short-term programmes, courses, and professional development programmes including Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) trainings, as well as Training of Trainers on Social Entrepreneurship and Essay/Academic Writing. SPCE is the only official centre for many international qualifications through the International Computer Driving License (ICDL), Certified International Professional Accountant Examina-

tion Network, Cambridge Assessment English Centre and Teaching Qualification Centre. Throughout 2019, SPCE provided professional training for internal and external instructors from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. SPCE also delivered over 2,000 international examinations, and actively promoted its certifications at education and government departments. SPCE students continue to take part in national and international competitions related to mental math and IT, and all SPCE centres conduct Global Money Week among high-school students and their parents to boost financial literacy.

Tajikistan

- SPCE in Tajikistan received grants amounting to over US$179,000 from the United States Embassy, to deliver the English Teaching Mentor Programme, English for Journalists course, "Study with US" programme, and an English course for Tajik governmental officials.

- SPCE Khorog conducted short-term courses and corporate seminars on "Tax and Law" for individual entrepreneurs under a grant from the International Organization for Migration. SPCE also delivered a course on the maintenance and minor repair of water systems to 42 participants. It was held in collaboration with the Aga Khan Foundation's Mountain Societies Development Support Programme, within the framework of the "Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation Management in Tajikistan" project funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

- A new corporate course on Dari language was launched for Pamir Energy staff in Khorog. SPCE in Khorog also conducted courses on developing management, marketing, and communication skills, the management of resources in tourism sector, as well as building basic reading skills.

- To meet market needs, SPCE Khorog offered courses on massage therapy, an introduction to cosmetology, and the basics of cell phone repair.

- Mental math students from SPCE Khorog participated in the "Genius Kid Tajikistan" Republican Olympiad in Dushanbe, and an International Olympiad in Tbilisi (Georgia). Students earned championship titles at both events.

- In collaboration with over 50 partners, SPCE Khorog led nine events promoting financial literacy for Global Money Week, reaching over 4,500 individuals directly, and over 45,000 individuals indirectly through the mass media.

- SPCE Khorog successfully completed a 5-year "Economic and Social Connections: A Multi-Input Area Development" project under a grant from USAID and AKF USA. As part of this project, SPCE enrolled 522 learners in a Business Planning course, and 66 learners in a Small and Medium Business Management (SMBM) programme.

- SPCE Tajikistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Accelerate Prosperity, an initiative of the Aga Khan Development Network, to provide financial and technical assistance services to target entrepreneurs in 16 districts of Tajikistan along the Afghan border.

- The SPCE learning centre in Dushanbe piloted Cambridge English programmes, which resulted in 38 students confirming their B1 and B2 language levels, and receiving internationally recognised certificates from Cambridge Assessment English. Ani Hawkinson, a Fulbright scholar, conducted four training sessions for teachers who are teaching English to journalists in Dushanbe.

- The main SPCE centre in Dushanbe demonstrated the highest enrollment of SPCE's two centres in the capital city. The Merve satellite centre was renovated in 2019, adding five furnished classrooms.

SPCE Graduates from 2006-2019

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
1 092	3 448	3 756	6 888	10 764	10 856	11 074	11 713	11 992	12 498	12 966	14 450	18 423	19 967	149 838
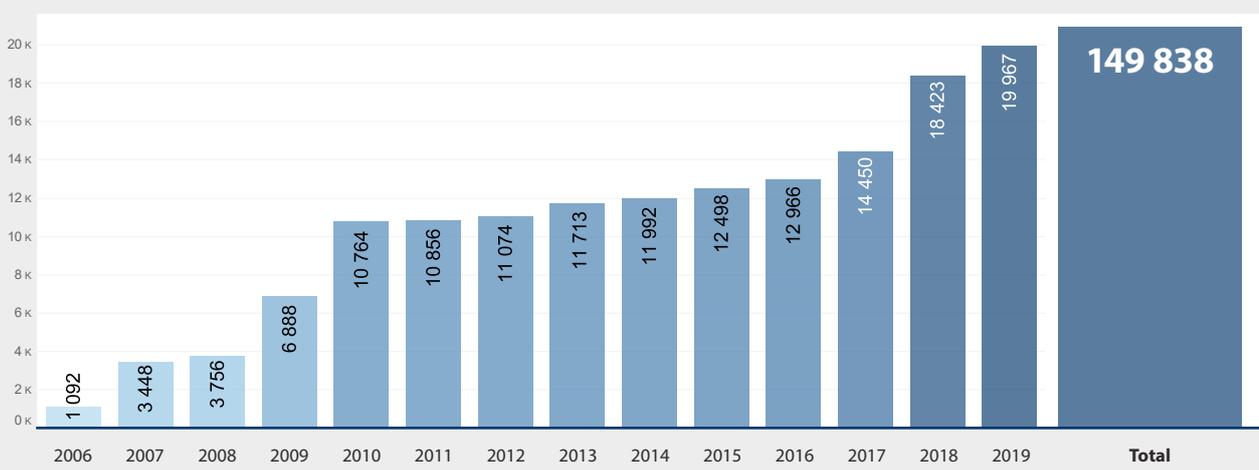
- The Bokhtar learning centre obtained a 5-year license from the Ministry of Education in Tajikistan, and continued expanding its programmes in 2019. The centre is actively promoting its Young Learners' programme in secondary schools of Bokhtar, to boost the enrollment and interest in its programmes, including the International Computer Driving License course, as well as Entrepreneurship, and Conversational English courses.

- In collaboration with university and secondary school teachers, SPCE Bokhtar delivered English Training Mentorship courses to 23 instructors on international standards of teaching methodology.

- SPCE conducted business planning courses to 80 learners as part of the Thrive Project. Participants from 10 locations across 7 districts of the Khatlon region, as well as from Khorog and the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast gained entrepreneurship skills.

- In Dushanbe, over 300 graduates were awarded certificates of achievement, and international certificates from the Cambridge Assessment English, and other SPCE programmes and courses. SPCE Khorog hosted its annual Graduation Ceremony with over 250 graduates in 11 programmes in 2019.

Kyrgyzstan
- Over 1,600 learners enrolled in 127 courses, short-term programmes, and seminars at SPCE Naryn, while SPCE Bishkek enrolled 505 learners.

- SPCE Kyrgyzstan delivered courses for customs officers in Bishkek and Osh in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and conducted entrepreneurship and ICDL trainings under the US-AID 'Youth Initiative' project. SPCE also delivered IT literacy training to healthcare representatives, madrasa students, and expanded its entrepreneurship programme across the country.

- As a licensed Cambridge Assessment English Centre, SPCE Kyrgyzstan launched new programmes: Young Learners (Pre-A1 to A2), and Intelligence Development in Primary Schools.

- Weekly sessions on pedagogical skills were delivered to local secondary school teachers in Bishkek, aimed at building capacity of English language instructors.

- An Information Technology Olympiad was organised in 13 schools for 3,957 students in Naryn, and 305 in Bishkek. The finalists were awarded certificates and given the opportunity to take the official ICDL examination free of charge.

- The annual graduation ceremony presented certificates to 182 students completing programmes at SPCE Naryn and Bishkek.

Kazakhstan
- SPCE Tekeli was included in the register of educational institutions in the Almaty region, enabling SPCE to train unemployed participants under the state budget. Graduates will be provided with employment opportunities from the Ministry of Labour.

- Fifty percent of graduates from SPCE's Assistant Secretary programme obtained jobs following graduation from the programme.

- SPCE won a US $50,000 state tender from the Tourism Department to deliver a Professional Guides Certification Training to 223 participants.

- UCA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Akimat, the National Chamber of Entrepreneurship, to conduct a short course on "Operator Grinding, Crushing and Sorting Machines".

Afghanistan
- SPCE Afghanistan conducted Gender Responsive Learning Environment seminars for over 1,000 learners, focused on gender terminology, application of gender standards into school management systems, and gender responsive pedagogy. Mental

Profile of Admitted Students in 2019

Gender

47%

53%

Age Distribution

>25 — 21%
19-25 — 26%
<19 — 53%

Employment Status

67% Students
17% Employed
12% Unemployed
4% Self-Employed
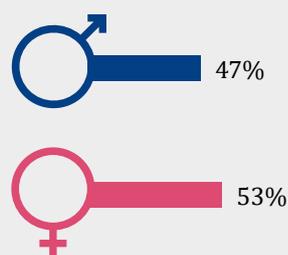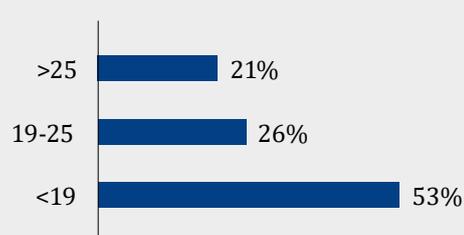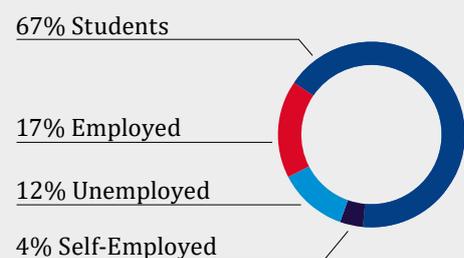
math training was also delivered to over 100 Instructors. These were offered as part of the Pathways to Innovation Afghanistan Project, funded by the Canada's International Development Research Centre, in partnership with the Aga Khan Foundation Canada.

▪ Over 100 women were enrolled in SPCE's Office Assistant and Entrepreneurship programmes in the Badakhshan province, as part of the Afghanistan Community-led Economic Stability project. The project was funded by the government of the Netherlands, and implemented by the Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan and SPCE. Ten trainers from Badakhshan, Takhar, Kunduz, and Bamyan provinces also received professional development training.

▪ SPCE's entrepreneurship prorgamme reached 600 trainees from the Aga Khan Foundation's Technical Vocational Education Training programme in 2019.

▲ Students and parents attended an SPCE Open Doors Day in Bishkek on September 13th, and learnt more about SPCE programmes and courses, as well as attended demo-classes in English, IT, and ICDL.

▪ Two mental math instructors from Afghanistan underwent professional development training in Bishkek at SPCE and the "Akademia Rosta" training centre for further implementation of SPCE's mental math programme among young learners.

▪ All five learning centres in Afghanistan participated in Global Money Week, and SPCE organised seminars to raise awareness about financial literacy.

▪ Over 500 graduates were awarded certificates for completing SPCE's Information Technology, English, cashier and mental math programmes in 2019.

Alumni Survey: In 2019, SPCE conducted a survey of 1,957 alumni who took courses during 2017-2018

52%	81%	83%	93%	96.5%
Entered university or found jobs after completing SPCE courses	Applied learnt knowledge or skills in current job or studies	Confirmed SPCE exceeded their expectations	Highly rated SPCE facilities and services	Would recommend SPCE to others

MOUNTAIN SOCIETIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI) is a transdisciplinary research institute within UCA's Graduate School of Development, dedicated to addressing the challenges and opportunities within Central Asian mountain communities and environments. MSRI's goal is to support and enhance the resilience and quality of life of mountain societies through the generation and application of sound scientific research. In 2019, MSRI strengthened ongoing partnerships and research programmes, initiated new projects, taught courses in UCA's Earth and Environmental Sciences undergraduate programme, launched a Certificate Programme in Natural Resources Management, and hosted Summer Universities and workshops.

Building Regional Research Capacity

Pathways to Innovation

MSRI launched a 30 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) Certificate Programme in Natural Resources Management (CNRM) to 20 faculty members from Badakhshan University, Bamyan University, Khorog State University, and the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) in Afghanistan. It was offered in July-August 2019, as part of the Pathways to Innovation project, funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Aga Khan Foundation Canada. The 3-week course included modules on concepts of sustainability, sustainable land management, integrated agricultural management, food systems, livelihoods in rural mountain communities, natural hazards, disaster risk reduction, and climate change. In November-December 2019, MSRI conducted post-CNRM workshops at Badakhshan, Bamyan, and Khorog State Universities to disseminate knowledge, and transfer technical skills to other faculty members and students. A total of 121 faculty members and students attended the workshops, 43% of which were women.

▲ Professor Roy C. Sidle (left), Director of the Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI), welcomed 21 faculty members and researchers from Tajikistan and Afghanistan to MSRI's inaugural cohort of the Certificate Programme in Natural Resources Management launched in Bishkek in July.

Thrive Tajikistan

MSRI implemented three research studies related to food security and food systems, as part of the "Thrive Tajikistan: Enhancing Social Services, Governance, and Economic Inclusion in Border Regions" project. It was jointly funded by the United States Agency for International Development and AKF USA. Two projects were conducted in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO), and one in the Khatlon region. In 2019, MSRI established a partnership with the Pamir Biological Institute (PBI) in Khorog, and successfully conducted research on wheat varietal screening at the PBI Research Station in Ishkashim, GBAO. During the growing season, PBI field staff regularly monitored research plots, and collected data on wheat growth and yields, in close collaboration with the PBI research team. Additional research projects on food security in GBAO and Khatlon are expected to be launched in March 2020.

Disaster Risk Management

In June 2019, MSRI researchers collaborated with geoscience researchers from the University of Bern (Switzerland) and the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (Austria) to deliver an intensive 10-day training on disaster risk management in Khorog. Participants learnt about geohazards, assessing their risk in the Pamirs, as well as sustainable approaches to disaster risk reduction. Lectures were followed by a 3-day field trip to Muminabad (Tajikistan), where students learnt about the watershed action plans being enacted by CARITAS.

Paleoclimate, Environmental Change and Social Interaction in Central Asia

MSRI, in collaboration with the German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ), organised its second "Learning Landscapes through Environmental Research and Monitoring" Summer School. It was held as part of the Paleoclimate, Environmental Change and Social Interaction in Central Asia (PALESCA) project, and funded by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF). Participants included twenty-two undergraduate and master students from Central Asian countries who study environment sciences or conduct scientific research. Professors and experts of MSRI, GFZ, the University of Amsterdam, Naryn State University, Central-Asian Institute for Applied Geosciences, Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, KyrgyzHydromet, and CAMP Alatoo. Students were introduced to several interrelated aspects of landscape research including geology, geomorphology, paleoclimatology, natural resources management, dendrochronology, wildlife science, and the socioeconomic aspects of mountain regions development, among other related topics. Following the Summer School, two participants had an opportunity to participate in a 2-week internship at GFZ in Germany.

Migration Governance and Rural Change

In 2019, MSRI launched a new project entitled, "Towards Forward-Looking Migration Governance: Addressing the Challenges, Assessing Capacities and Designing Future Strategies" (AGRUMIG), in the Batken, Jalal-Abad and Naryn provinces. It was launched with support from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. The project focuses on the linkages between out-migration, and agricultural and rural change across seven countries (Nepal, Thailand, Morocco, China, Ethiopia, Moldova and Kyrgyzstan). The aim is to identify the mechanisms that produce a variety of outcomes regarding out-migration and rural change. Based on this comparative analysis, the AGRUMIG project contributes to the framing of context specific policy at national and global levels, that more effectively combine migration with agriculture and rural change.

◄ Participants of MSRI's Summer School on "Learning Landscapes through Environmental Research and Monitoring" studied different components of soil during a field visit to Naryn State University's soil laboratory.

MSRI has published a variety of research since 2011, including a background paper series and policy brief series. In 2019, the Institute published a Manual on Soil Study and Evaluation through Experiments, Proceedings from the Silk Roads Conference, as well as briefs on border conflicts. Research publications are available for free download at

@ www.ucentralasia.org/research/msri_publications/en

INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

The Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA) was established in 2011 to strengthen public policymaking in Central Asia. It provides in-depth analyses of current and emerging policy issues facing the region and aims to improve the analytical capacity of governments and civil society to use evidence-based research in decision-making processes through professional development. IPPA is part of UCA's Graduate School of Development.

In 2019, IPPA launched new projects, strengthened existing partnerships, and contributed to the advancement of evidence-based policymaking in Afghanistan and Central Asia through research, training, and professional development initiatives. With support from national and international partners and donors, IPPA's activities focused on economic policy, trade, tourism, small and medium enterprises, food security and nutrition, agriculture, employability and civic engagement of youth, mining, and public health.

▲   The Fifth Annual Life in Kyrgyzstan Conference brought together participants from 10 countries, and served as an open and stimulating platform for intellectual exchange on social and economic changes on Migration Policy in Kyrgyzstan, and Central Asia.

Academic Programmes

A second Executive Masters in Economic Policy (EMEP) Programme was delivered by IPPA to 35 students in 2019 in Bishkek and Naryn. EMEP is being offered to Afghan civil servants through a partnership with the Ministry of Finance of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

The Certificate Programme in Economic Policy (CPEP) was conducted in Bishkek for 33 participants (82% women) from the National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic, Ministry of Economy of Kyrgyzstan, the World Bank, GIZ, and other public and private entities. CPEP was offered to civil servants, independent analysts, and staff at think-tanks and non-governmental organisations. It was designed to equip learners with sound theoretical knowledge, and the tools of economic management and policy-making required to tackle issues faced by developing economies.

The first wave of CPEP in Tajikistan was delivered in Autumn 2019 in Dushanbe for 22 participants from the Institute of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Customs Service under the Government of Tajikistan, Ministry of Industry and New Technologies, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry

of Agriculture. The second wave of CPEP in Tajikistan is expected to be delivered in Spring 2020.

Partnerships and Outreach

In October 2019, IPPA and the Ministry of Economy of Kyrgyzstan signed a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate long-term cooperation in educational and research activities.

The United Nations system in Kyrgyzstan and IPPA jointly initiated a Development Dialogues Series, aimed at supporting evidence-based integrated policy formulation in Kyrgyzstan by providing a platform for discussion, exchange of analyses, and sharing international best practices on key development issues.

The series will comprise of six dialogues, and three events took place in 2019 covering the Development of a Comprehensive Long-Term Evidence-Based Migration Policy for Kyrgyzstan, Strengthening Health Emergency Preparedness and Readiness to Advance Health Security in Kyrgyzstan, and Industrial and Technological development in Kyrgyzstan. Dialogues are designed to foster discussion, and reports will be published on each theme as policy briefs.

▲   The Institute of Public Policy and Administration of UCA celebrated the achievements of 22 Afghan civil servants (40% women) who were awarded an Executive Masters in Economic Policy (EMEP) at a ceremony in Kabul (Afghanistan) in March. *Front row from L to R:* Ms. Naheed Sarabi, Deputy Minister of Finance; Dr. Bohdan Krawchenko, Dean of UCA's Graduate School of Development; Dr. Mohammad Humayon Qayoumi, Minister of Finance of Afghanistan; Mrs. Nurjehan Mawani, Aga Khan Development Network Diplomatic Representative to Afghanistan.

The Fifth Annual Life in Kyrgyzstan (LiK) Conference took place in Bishkek on October 23-24, and was attended by over 100 participants from 10 countries, and served as a stimulating platform for intellectual exchange on social and economic changes in Kyrgyzstan, and Central Asia. It was organised by IPPA, the Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops (IGZ, Germany), International Security and Development Center (ISDC, Germany), and the World Bank. It was supported by the Aga Khan Foundation Kyrgyzstan, UK's Department for International Development, and USAID. The Conference speakers addressed a broad range of topics, including migration, agriculture, nutrition, health, youth employment, poverty, social protection, and social norms.

Research
Data collection for the 6th Life in Kyrgyzstan study was initiated in 2019, in partnership with IGZ, and support from USAID and AKF. LiK is a research-based multi-sectoral panel survey of households and individuals in Kyrgyzstan, and collects information at household and individual levels on topics such as demographics, assets, expenditure, migration, employment, agricultural markets, shocks, social networks, subjective well-being, and many other topics to help improve research capacity in the Central Asian region.

IPPA conducted two research projects within the CCTN Research Grants Programme, which were initiated and funded by the CAREC Institute. The first project covered "Opportunities and Challenges for Agri-food Trade Between Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan," through a joint collaboration between UCA and the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). The study includes an analysis of legislations, trade regime (barriers) and practices, qualitative analysis of available bilateral trade data, and in-depth interviews with stakeholders, as well as findings from fieldtrips to the Kyrgyzstan-China border checkpoint in Torugart, and Gilgit-Baltistan. The second study was conducted jointly with the Westminster International University in Tashkent (WIUT) on the "Analysis of Cooperation in the Tourism Sector between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan; a Study of Cross-border Value Chains". The research reviewed cooperation in the tourism sector between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, to deliver joint cross-border touristic experiences for bilateral tourism, and international tourists visiting Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. In particular, the research examined existing value chains operating in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, success factors, as well as bottlenecks in their operations.

In 2019, IPPA also initiated a regional research project in cooperation with the Naryn State University (Kyrgyzstan) and Khorog State University (Tajikistan). It aimed at investigating the current state of important business sectors in regional mountain economies, and supporting capacity building in the higher educational institutions of both countries.

In partnership with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, IPPA launched a project supporting multi-stakeholder engagement and the role of diets and food systems in the prevention of obesity and non-communicable diseases in Kyrgyzstan. It aimed at conducting a systematic country-wide analysis to understand the cause and effect between trends in various dimensions of food systems.

IPPA collaborated with the Centre for Global Child Health at the Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) in Toronto (Canada), to execute quantitative and qualitative analyses of the drivers of stunting reduction in Kyrgyzstan. A report on the "Global Exemplars in Stunting Reduction: Kyrgyzstan Country Case Study" was completed in 2019.

UCA, in partnership with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, conducted a research project to analyse policies related to pasture management to encompass climate change mitigation and adaptation goals in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

In collaboration with the Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Transition Economies (IAMO), IPPA is analysing strategies for stimulating the revitalisation of livestock husbandry in Kyrgyzstan.

As part of the Aga Khan Foundation's irrigation project, implemented in partnership with the UK's Department for International Development, IPPA conducted the final phase of an impact study. It studied how to improve stability and natural resource management in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, reduce violence, and promote stability in the fragile regions of the Ferghana Valley.

IPPA is partnering with the Mountain Societies Development Support Programme in Kyrgyzstan to address top-down and bottom-up constraints to youth civic participation, and increase youth's readiness for opportunities in the Kyrgyz labour market. In 2019, IPPA collected baseline data, conducted a market assessment and launched a value chain study. The project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

In cooperation with the University of Oxford, IPPA studied the development of a dynamic "Mediation Model for Sustainable Infrastructure Development" to promote inclusive economic development and social welfare. This study was conducted in the context of Chinese mega infrastructure initiatives in Mongolia, through a scale up of a pioneering dispute resolution model developed in Mongolia's mining sector.

IPPA published six new peer-reviewed working papers in English and Russian in an established series that has released 54 papers since 2012, as well as other independent publications. Working papers are available for free download at
@ www.ucentralasia.org/research/ippa_publications/en

▼   IPPA and the United Nations in Kyrgyzstan held the second in a series of Development Dialogues on migration policy in Kyrgyzstan on March 1st. From L to R: Nurlan Sheripov, State Secretary of the State Migration Service of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, Prof. Dr. S. Sohail H. Naqvi, Rector of UCA, Bolotbek Ibraimzhanov, Chairman of the State Migration Service, Roza Otunbayeva, Former President of Kyrgyzstan, and Ozonnia Ojielo, United Nations Resident Representative.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HUMANITIES UNIT

UCA's Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit (CHHU) advances the mission of the University to help the different peoples of the region preserve and draw upon their rich cultural traditions and heritage as assets for the future. This objective is achieved by CHHU through research, documenting, archiving, and supporting the work of regional scholars through UCA's Cultural Heritage Book Series.

Research Papers Series Launched

In 2019, CHHU launched a Research Papers Series, complementing its existing Cultural Heritage Book Series. Three publications were released, including two by Robert Middleton on the history of the "Great Game," and a publication on "New Discoveries About Ancient Naryn," developed as part of CHHU's Naryn Archeological Project (NAP), which has been ongoing since 2017.

Several CHHU publications and research papers are available for free downloaded on UCA's website at:
⊘ https://ucentralasia.org/chhu

Building New Cultural Partnerships along the Silk Road

In collaboration with Durham University (UK) and the Laarjverd non-governmental organisation (Pakistan), CHHU launched a new "GCRF Resilient Silk Route Cultural Heritage Network" project. It is funded by the UK's Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF). The project aims at building a network of local organisations and academic institutions in Pakistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, to help develop more resilient local economies,

and in the context of BRI, build more sustainable societies in the mountain regions. The GCRF network will address issues of preserving the local cultural heritages of mountain communities, work through the threats and opportunities created by the development of the transit corridor, and foster a stronger South-South collaboration through sharing of knowledge.

Supporting State Museums in Kyrgyzstan

As part of CHHU's ongoing efforts to expand the role of state museums and build capacity, CHHU organised trainings and workshops for museum specialists in Naryn and Bishkek. The sessions covered new trends and technologies, public relations and communication tools, as well as collection management, museum storage, accounting, and exhibitions.

A two-week workshop was organised for artists in collaboration with the Tubingen University in June 2019. A

▲ The Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit of UCA, organised a training on "Museum Collection Management: Storage, Accounting and Exhibition," for 30 specialists from 17 state museums in Bishkek, Naryn, Osh, and Issyk-Kul regions in Kyrgyzstan.

research project team was established to develop futuristic concepts of peaceful coexistence of the Naryn-Syr Darya river and the social life of people. The results of this experimental collaboration of artists and researchers were compiled by UCA and Tubingen University into a "Naryn-Syr Darya: Three Stories of the River" exhibition, which was held at the Naryn Historical-Ethnographic Museum in Naryn.

Building New Partnerships

In 2019, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries of the University of Auckland (New Zealand) and UCA, fostering academic exchange and cooperation between the two universities. Representatives from the University of Auckland and UCA discussed collaborating through exchange programmes, and opportunities for graduate education. The guests also visited the Naryn campus, where they met UCA students interested in pursuing design, engineering, creative arts, or architecture, and presented the interdisciplinary programme of their university.

Preserving Endangered Languages in Badakhshan Afghanistan

CHHU conducted a project on the preservation and documentation of Endangered Languages in Badakhshan Afghanistan, in partnership with the Pamirs Eco-Cultural Tourism Association (PECTA), Institute of Humanities of Khorog (IH) and the Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan. The project focused on preserving the most endangered Pamiri languages spoken in Afghanistan including Rushani, Wakhi, Ishkashimi, and Sangilechi.

Due to ongoing conflict and instability, these languages have not been studied to the extent of those in Tajikistan, and the majority still lack a written script. In 2017, UNESCO reported that they are now considered to be severely endangered. Sangilechi, for instance, has only 1,500 speakers left. CHHU, together with its partners, launched

the project in February 2019, in order to document and disseminate these ancient languages before they, and the inherent cultural knowledge and unique historical wealth, were lost forever. The project was funded by the British Council and Aga Khan Foundation United Kingdom.

CHHU and IH initiated data collection for dictionaries in the spring of 2019. IH also designed and implemented a workshop to teach local volunteers in Rushan, Ishkashim, Wakhan, and Shughnan, to record and collect samples of the languages, and accurately translate them into Dari. Forty-five volunteers from Badakhshan (Afghanistan) travelled to villages where the languages are spoken, to collect information for the development of databases. Once completed, the databases were converted into online/offline applications for android, iOS and the web.

CHHU also worked closely with PECTA to collect materials on historical and cultural sites in Afghanistan. The information was developed into a tourism pamphlet, and a series of tourism masterclasses were delivered to over 150 individuals living in Badakhshan, of which 53% were female. The pamphlet along with several short videos will be used to help promote local tourism in Afghan Badakhshan.

In the final phase of the project, CHHU launched the applications and shared them with the local communities. A Facebook page and a YouTube channel were developed to share videos and updates with community members. CHHU will share any proposed updates with the Institute of Humanities of Khorog, to add to the dictionaries and applications. This will also serve as a platform for individuals outside of the communities to learn and understand more about the local culture.

▼   Altyn Kapalova, Research Fellow at CHHU, presented her new fairy tale book titled "Tanais and a Tree", to students at UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education summer school in Naryn.

CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVE

The Civil Society Initiative (CSI) was established in 2017 to foster an enabling policy and administrative environment for civil society in Central Asia, and to assist the development of a broad spectrum of civil society actors. CSI's initial geographical focus is Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, with a long-term goal to expand. Through extensive rural and urban outreach, it aims to facilitate networks to exchange knowledge, know-how and practice to advance the work of civil society organisations.

Mapping Civil Society in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan

CSI commissioned four discussion papers covering Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, including topics on philanthropy, the development of professional and business associations, capacity-building of civil society actors through training and university programmes, and the policies, practices, and legal frameworks enabling civil society development. They are available for free downloaded on UCA's website at:

🌐 www.ucentralasia.org/research/csi_publications/en

Philanthropy

CSI and the International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law conducted a series of discussions on the draft laws "on charitable organisations" and "on the amendments to the Tax Code for the application of interest deduction or principle 1% with charity organisations". A working group was formed as an outcome of these discussions, and is aimed at promoting the new law on charity in Kyrgyzstan's Parliament. To bring Central Asian countries into the international philanthropy network, UCA became an official member of the Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support (WINGS) in 2019. CSI's research on philanthropy was published in the Knowledge Centre of WINGS.

Citizen Engagement

A four-day training on "Citizen Engagement with Open Government Data" was organised by UCA in March in Bishkek for 40 participants from civil society organisations across Kyrgyzstan. The event aimed at raising civil society organisations' awareness of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), and strengthening the capacity to monitor the implementation of the Achyk Okmot National Action Plan for 2018-2020 through open data sources. The training was supported by the United States Agency for International Development.

New Pathways to Development

A regional conference on "New Pathways to Development" was organised by CSI in Bishkek in May, bringing together over 150 attendees from 12 countries. It provided a platform for key stakeholders including government, civil society organisations, corporations, and researchers, to discuss and debate new approaches to foster the growth of a vibrant civil society.

▲ Dinara Musabekova, Director of the Civil Society Initiative (CSI) at UCA, responding to questions from the media at CSI's regional conference on "New Pathways to Development".

Promoting Open Government Participation

CSI continued to lead efforts in promoting accountable, responsive and inclusive governance in Kyrgyzstan, through its membership and participation in the National Forum of OGP. A number of civic discussions were conducted by CSI on open data, including the data disclosure in the mining industry, state and municipal property, as well as external and internal state borrowings. These initiatives were included in the National Action Plan and were posted on the Governmental portal www.gov.kg and OGP website www.ogp.el.kg which was developed by CSI. In October, the Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan presented a certificate of recognition to CSI, for its contribution to the development of the First National Action Plan, and the formation of the National Forum.

Focus group discussions were also organised by CSI in response to company-community conflicts in six mining-affected communities in Kyrgyzstan. They were aimed at better understanding company-community dynamics prior to conducting data disclosure with a commitment under the National Action Plan of the Open Government. The results and recommendations were shared with the working group for further consideration by the State Agency on Mineral Resources. In the framework of this work, UCA was recognised by the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan and the National Forum of the OGP, for its significant contribution specifically related to the disclosure of mining industry data.

AGA KHAN HUMANITIES PROJECT

The Aga Khan Humanities Project (AKHP) was founded in 1997 by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, and joined UCA in 2007. It fosters critical thinking and academic writing skills through an integrated humanities curriculum. AKHP develops and delivers resources, training, and courses within a cross disciplinary framework.

In 2019, AKHP courses were delivered by 93 educational institutions across Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, and reached over 50,500 learners. To date, over 180,000 leaners have benefitted from these programmes.

Debate Training
AKHP conducted Cross Debate Format (CDF) and British Parliamentary Debating trainings, and organised tournaments for over 350 students. In December, AKHP held the first Inter-Club Debate League CDF tournament in Tajikistan. AKHP also hosted the Fourth English language Central Asian Debate Tournament in Dushanbe, with participants from five countries.

Curriculum Development
In 2019, AKHP continued developing a Master of Arts (MA) course covering the "Central Asian Worldview: Past and Present." From January to May 2019, AKHP successfully piloted the course at the Chokan Valikhanov Institute of History and Ethnology, Committee for Science at Kazakhstan's Ministry of Education and Sciences, I. Arabaev Kyrgyz State University, and the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Tajik Academy of Sciences. From February 2020, AKHP's

MA course will be officially included in the curriculum at these educational institutions as an elective course. In September 2019, AKHP signed an agreement with the Institute of Geography of Kazakhstan to develop an Interactive Electronic Ethnographic Scientific Map of UCA's Founding States, which will be incorporated into the MA course upon completion.

Faculty Development Programme
AKHP conducted a faculty development programme in January 2019, and a Training of Trainers in June 2019 on its MA course. Participants learnt how to integrate key concepts from AKHP's textbooks within the framework of AKHP's MA course.

AKHP Public Lecture Series
Established in 2012, AKHP's Public Lecture Series provides a platform for inter-disciplinary discourse between the humanities and natural sciences disciplines. In 2019, AKHP organised 25 public lectures reaching over 1,000 individuals.

UCA's Public Lecture Series, and Online Lecture Series, are available for viewing in English or Russian on UCA's YouTube channel at:
https://bit.ly/PLS-UCA

▲ Forty debaters from across Tajikistan competed in AKHP's Republican Debate Tournament in Dushanbe in July. The tournament is held annually, and is aimed at building cooperation between debaters from Tajikistan.

▲ At the Digital Transformation in Central Asia conference, the President of Kyrgyzstan was greeted by a robot. From L to R: Dr. Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, Chairman of UCA's Board of Trustees, President Sooronbai Jeenbekov, Gulbara Kalieva, Chairwoman of the Supreme Court, and Kubatbek Boronov, First Deputy Prime Minister. The robot was built by Sanjar Jumabekov (right).

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

In 2019, a number of initiatives were undertaken to strengthen the internal Information Technology (IT) infrastructure of the University, and build capacity in digital skills across UCA.

Internal Infrastructure and Organisational Configuration

UCA launched an Intranet portal in March 2019, which provides a central platform for UCA employees to collaborate and share information from anywhere in the world. UCA employees can access policies, forms, contact information for colleagues, announcements, and links to university resources, among other information. Since its launch, some administrative functions have been digitised, and are now solely managed through the Intranet, demonstrating its capacity to streamline internal procedures.

UCA commenced an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) rollout with SAP aimed at automating and integrating all processes in finance, procurement, human resources, grants management, and legal contracts. Among other benefits, data management will take place through a single point of entry, and users will have access to real time data and reporting. In the final training week, over 75 zoom connections were made daily, enabling the Phase I rollout to be completed for a January 2020 launch. Phase II is expected to take place in 2020, and will involve adding relevant functionality to benefit UCA's students.

Digital Transformation in Central Asia

UCA organised a conference on Digital Transformation in Central Asia (DTCA) in partnership with the State Committee for Information Technology and Communications and the High Technology Park of the Kyrgyz Republic. This three-day international Conference was held in Bishkek, and included a day-long session at UCA's campus in Naryn.

The DTCA Conference, taking place in the year designated by the Government of Kyrgyzstan as the Year of Regional Development and Digitisation, brought together over 20 international speakers from 12 countries, and over 100 leading technology leaders from Central Asia, to discuss current and future technology trends in the region. Sooronbai Jeenbekov, President of the Kyrgyz Republic, inaugurated the Conference and highlighted the Government's goals and policies for digital transformation in the country. The 2019 Conference resulted in the establishment of a Digital Transformation Advisory Group by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, and a platform to launch a number of new technology policies. The cost of hosting the Conference was almost entirely funded by contributions from business sponsors and conference registration fees.

Dr. Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of UCA, delivered opening remarks.

Altynai Omurbekova, Vice Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, opened day two of the Conference.

President Sooronbai Jeenbekov (front row 2nd from right), applauds speakers who attended the Conference from 12 countries.

Partnerships and Free Resources

UCA has formed partnerships with organisations at the forefront of their technological specialisations. SAP will provide access to 2,400 free online courses on the SAP portal for UCA students. An Academic Alliance with UiPath offers opportunities for UCA students or staff to access free courses on Robotic Process Automation (RPA), equipping them with skills to understand and deploy this emerging technology. The Academic Alliance also facilitates access to Master Training programmes on Data Analytics, Information Systems, and Process Mining through the Celonis Academic Intelligent Business Cloud. A series of online public lectures on topics such as Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity was also launched by UCA. Effective use of technology has also enabled international speakers to address Central Asia audiences without having to leave their home office.

Daniyar Suiunbekov (left) and Konstantin Slivnoi (centre), pitched a project to develop a database for online medical advice. UCA undergraduate students presented innovative tech projects with a social impact at a hackathon exhibition organised as part of the DTCA Conference.

Dr. S. Sohail H. Naqvi, Rector of UCA, delivered an address on the "Digital Acceleration of Regional Development".

Dastan Dogoev (right), Chairman of the State Committee for Information Technology and Communications, highlights the objectives of the Conference. UCA Chief Information Officer, Shaukat Ali Khan, standing left.

Financial Overview
Key Figures

Total Investments, grants and revenues since inception (2000 - 2019):

AKDN's Contribution

US$ 265m

Grants and Financing from International Agencies

US$ 67m

Operating Revenues

US$ 12m

Total Investment in UCA

US$ 344m

Total Operating Expenses for 2019: US$ 24.6 million

○ Staff Costs	46%
○ Depreciation Costs	23%
○ Operating Costs	14%
○ Programme Costs	11%
○ Financing Costs	6%

○ School of Arts and Sciences	59%
○ Central Administration Office	18%
○ School of Professional and Continuing Education	12%
○ Graduate School of Development	10%
○ Aga Khan Humanities Project	1%

Total amount of grants received and distributed in 2019: US$ 2.5 million
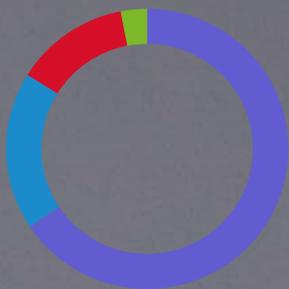
Donor Origin

- United States 65%
- European Union 18%
- Canada 13%
- Other 4%

Programme Beneficiary

- Graduate School of Development 55%
- School of Professional and Continuing Education 45%

Human Resource Profile

Faculty & Staff

- Khorog 30%
- Naryn 23%
- Bishkek 21%
- Dushanbe 11%
- Afghanistan 8%
- Tekeli 6%
- Bokhtar 1%

- Central Asian 91%
- International 9%

645 Total Number of Faculty & Staff

38% Female

62% Male

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To The Governing Body of the University of Central Asia

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the University of Central Asia ("the University"), which comprise of the balance sheet as at 31 December 2019, and the statement of income and expenses, statement of comprehensive income, and statement of cash flow for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the University as at 31 December 2019, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs).

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the University as required by ISAs and have fulfilled our other responsibilities under its ethical requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with IFRS, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Company or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Board of Trustees are responsible for overseeing the Company's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the planning and performance of the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control;

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the University's internal control;

- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management;

- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Company to cease to continue as a going concern.

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation; and

We communicate with Board of Trustees regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Chartered Accountants

Audit Engagement Partner: Omer Chughtai

Date: 27 April 2020

Karachi

INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

The following institutional partners have contributed to UCA's programmes, and their support is gratefully acknowledged.

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