

Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit Seminar for Museum Workers in Kyrgyzstan



Aida Alymova (left), Director of the Center of Nomadic Civilization in Sary-Oi Village of Issyk-Kul Province explaining innovative ways of presenting museum artifacts to regional museum workers.

More than 50 representatives from regional and city museums in Kyrgyzstan attended an online national seminar organized by the Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit (CHHU) of the University of Central Asia (UCA): “New Forms and Narratives in Working with the Museum Audience”. The seminar was organised in December 2020 with support from the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Information of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Participants discussed issues such as: What should be done to develop rural museums? What needs to be done to make museums accessible to communities that were previously unavailable? What do museums need to do so that local communities are not silent spectators, but creators of museum content? How to make museums sites educational platforms?

These issues were considered through the

prism of local and international practices in order to give impetus to new initiatives to expand museum audiences in Kyrgyzstan.

“There are many best practices in the world today on the use of digital solutions in promoting museum activities, and we must apply such successful practices in our work,” said Nurjigit Kadyrbekov, Minister of Culture, Tourism and Information of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Continued on page 2

How Science Improves the Quality of Life of Mountain Communities



The geographical remoteness of certain societies do not mean that they are not impacted by major contemporary challenges, such as climate change, the degradation of natural resources, or declining agricultural production. For example, numerous surveys have been carried out within the framework of projects in Kyrgyzstan among local people in order to determine the evolution of supply and demand of fodder for livestock farmers in the face of climate change and their economic difficulties, but also the effects of migration of workers abroad on the local economy and life.

Weather stations, like this one in Naryn, Kyrgyz Republic, enable a systematic analysis of the vulnerabilities of local communities to climate change and thereby guide research to improve resilience.

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

National Seminar for Museum Workers in Kyrgyzstan

Aida Alymova, Director of Kurmanjan Datka Center of Nomadic Civilization, underscored the need to improve policies on training museum personnel. “The success of museums directly depends on the level of knowledge and training of museum workers.”

Museums must learn how to adapt to a rapidly changing world, said Aibek Baiymbetov, Junior Research Fellow of CHHU. They must change their framework from the preservation of objects of historical and cultural value “to the deployment of more adaptive museum content through social and educational projects, filling the museum with a holistic context using digital and creative approaches.”

Baktygul Midinova, Director of the Osh Regional Museum of Art, said “this seminar was valuable because museums representatives were able not only to discuss their common problems and ways to solve them, but also received a lot of new knowledge to improve museum activities through digital solutions.”

The seminar also featured opening remarks from Dr. Elmira Kochumkulova, Head of CHHU, and presentations from Galiya Fayzullina, Turan University,

Kazakhstan; Cholpon Tentieva from the Kyrgyz National Museum of Fine Arts; and Altyn Kapalova and Aibek Baiymbetov from CHHU.

The seminar was the sixth in a series organized by UCA with a focus on rural museums. The aim is to improve the skills of museum professionals, introduce inno-

vative solutions in organizing a modern museum and improve the effectiveness of working with museum audiences.

The CHHU continues to build partnerships with regional and city museums and plans to conduct a number of cultural, research, and educational events on cultural policy in Kyrgyzstan in the future.



Altyn Kapalova, Research Fellow of CHHU (left), and Anara Sabitova, Director of the Museum of History and Ethnography in Naryn, presenting contemporary museum practices.

Continued from page 1

How Science Improves Quality of Life

The Mountain Societies Research Institute of UCA was created to study the impact of these challenges. By bringing together a team of researchers from complementary sciences, it can, for example, combine socio-economic analysis, hydrology, and cartography. The objective is to bring together different areas of expertise in order to analyse, understand, and contribute to the development of mountain societies in the isolated valleys of Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan), where little or no research is being conducted.

These surveys have led policy makers to calibrate their agricultural and migration policies, and local communities to increase livestock productivity in a sustainable manner. Other surveys were conducted to bring local people to the table to discuss conflicts of interest and

the sharing of natural resources along the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. These working groups provide a real transfer of knowledge in the interest of the local communities. And MSRI also uses statistical analysis using advanced technologies such as remote sensing to identify and quantify problems of natural resources.

For example, vegetation, runoff and climate maps (available to the general public) have been produced in the Isfara basin to inform farmers about the irrigation conditions required for their plots. In the Khatlon region of Tajikistan, MSRI conducts long-term research to introduce appropriate and low-cost technologies to local people for the production of sweet potato, which is profitable on the market and nutritious for self-consumption.

MSRI also coordinates the installation of

climate stations in the Naryn region of Kyrgyzstan to build a dataset essential for understanding climate change. The data enables a systematic analysis of the vulnerabilities of local communities to climate change and thus guide research to improve their resilience. These detailed maps are produced and disseminated to the general public in areas at risk in terms of floods, landslides, and erosion to prevent events such as the Mumunabad flood in 2012 in Tajikistan, which destroyed infrastructure, croplands, and lives. Local populations welcome the benefits derived from scientific research conducted by UCA through its various institutes.

By harnessing the strengths of a multidisciplinary institute, UCA’s Mountain Societies Research Institute studies the impact of challenges, like climate change, despite geographical remoteness.

Impact of Digital Technology on Urbanization, Aging Societies, and Medicine



Dr. J.P. Auffret discusses how Taiwan used digital technology to successfully address the Covid-19 pandemic.

From software that helps manage chronic illnesses to Artificial Intelligence (AI) that enhances driver safety, to robotics that can address needs of an aging society; the possibilities are endless for using digital technologies, according to Dr. J.P. Auffret, co-founder and president of the International Academy of CIOs, an NGO based in Tokyo, Japan. "It's a very exciting time, but also a very challenging time...It's a time of great opportunity and great risks," he said during a webinar on Innovations in Information Communications Technology (ICT) and Potential Ramifications for Society, hosted by the University of Central Asia on January 14th, 2021.

The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the potential of digital technologies, he said, citing the example of Taiwan, whose successful approach relied on using ICT. Early during the pandemic, it not only connected its immigration system with its health system to develop contact tracing, but also used technology to secure support from its citizens. Today, he added, governments are exploring how technology can facilitate post-Covid recovery.

Auffret also highlighted various ways governments around the world have used technology to achieve growth and

development. He cited how India has used technology to leapfrog its economy, citing its initiative to provide digital identity to over one billion of its population, mostly from rural areas who previously had no birth certificates. About 200 million now have access to government payments and other benefits as a result, he said.

At the same time, however, governments must also learn how to balance digital technology capabilities with threats to privacy and cybersecurity. Among the world trends where the use of digital technology has the potential for major impact are in addressing urbanization, aging societies, and chronic illnesses, said Auffret. With the rise of megacities, especially in Asia and Africa, governments face the challenge of providing social inclusion for lower-income rural residents who are moving to urban cities.

In response to a question from the audience about how universities such as UCA can prepare graduates for the future, Auffret underscored the need to "stay current" through partnerships with industry and government, joint research, and advisory boards. Universities must also conduct periodic curriculum reviews that update not only the technical curriculum, but also its business and policy curriculum, he added.

Somani Family Donates Scholarship Endowment

Rahim Somani was the Chief Financial Officer of the University of Central Asia based in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, for 12 years. In late 2020 he migrated to Canada to be

with his family, and now lives in Prince George, British Columbia, where he is Vice President of Finance and Administration at the University of Northern British Columbia.



The Somani Family L to R: Salima, Rahim, Tabreek, Manaaim, Mother Tajuddaula, and Faizaan.

Rahim is an alumnus of the Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan School in Karachi, a recipient of the Aga Khan Education Services Scholarship, and has served with the Aga Khan Development Network for over two decades. Under the guidance and leadership of Rahim's mother, Tajuddaula Somani, the Somani family has been a generous donor to the University's programmes, and left a remarkable legacy by donating US\$ 500,000 to an endowment for scholarships at the School of Arts and Sciences.

Established as a family endowment, the Tajuddaula Sadruddin Ghulam

Hussain Somani and Family Scholarship Endowment will annually provide two types of scholarships. Depending on the disbursement the Endowment generates, half the Scholarships will be for Awards of Academic Excellence, and the other half for Women of Excellence Awards. Since the entire pledge has already been paid, Scholarships were distributed in 2020, and are expected to continue every year.

"This truly inspiring and exemplary gift is more meaningful because it comes from the family of an employee with intimate knowledge of the mission and objectives of the University of Central Asia," said Dr. Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of UCA, whose association with Rahim spans over two decades. They worked closely during the strategic planning and construction of the University and its start-up phase.

SPCE Student Wins Award from Ukraine

While his classmates in first grade were still learning to add and subtract, Dovud Imomnazarov could do complex four digit additions, subtractions, and multiplications in his head, thanks to skills he learned at UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Dovud began studying mental arithmetic in October 2017 at age 7. Eight months later, he won a champion cup after taking part in the International Mental Arithmetic Olympiad in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

His parents said mental math helped Dovud develop concentration, imagination, perseverance, speed, academic excellence, and independence. It helped him excel not just in math, but also in arts and sciences. He would solve logic puzzles, analyse information, solve problems, and learn great poems on his own, they said. Dovud and his family now live



Dovud Imomnazarov, an SPCE student who won the International Mental Math Olympiad in 2018, now lives with his family in Ukraine, and continues to use his mental math skills.

in Ukraine, where mental math continues to help him succeed, and recently received a Certificate of Merit from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine for his academic performance.

SPCE Computer Courses Help Job Seekers



Nargis Kholmurodzoda at the computer station.

Nargis Kholmurodzoda attended computer literacy classes at UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education learning centre in Bokhtar, Tajikistan, which she says "gave me the skills to find a job." Computer literacy is in much demand, and companies are looking for skilled staff with knowledge of word processing, spreadsheets, and accounting software.

Nargis attended courses under the International Computer Driving License (ICDL Asia), which is the world's leading computer skills certification. She wanted a job in the field of information technology but lacked sufficient professional skills. After completing her SPCE courses, Nargis now works at a cell phone company in Bokhtar.

SPCE Graduate Opens Kindergarten in Bamyan



A graduate of the Women's Entrepreneurship programme in Bamyan Province, Afghanistan, has opened a private childcare centre called "Khurshid", which provides services for children ages 3-6.

Marzia Nazari took part in a programme implemented by UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education, and supported by the Government of the Netherlands and Aga Khan Foundation-Afghanistan (AKF-A). Upon successful completion of the programme, she received a grant from AKF-A that enabled her to start her own business. Khurshid Kindergarten is in the city centre and can accommodate up to 36 children. Nazari began her training in 2019 within the framework of the Afghanistan Community-Led Economic Stability (#ACES) Project.



IPPA Report Addresses Mining Issues in Kyrgyzstan

UCA's Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA) has published a new report that supports the efforts of the government of the Kyrgyz Republic to mitigate conflict potential in the mining sector of the country. Addressing Local Conflicts in the Kyrgyz Republic's Mining Industry: A Holistic Approach, explores the main factors contributing to local grievances with mining operations and provides policy recommendations to the government to address those issues. The publication is in Russian, and available for [free download](#).

Almaty TV Features UCA Journalism Training Project

Zhetysu, Almaty Region's local TV channel, has produced "Science Journalism", which examines a project being implemented by the University of Central Asia with support from the U.S. Embassy in Kazakhstan.

UCA's SPCE in Tekeli, Kazakhstan, has been conducting online sessions for 24 local journalists to enhance their skills on science reporting and fact-checking, among other topics.

One of the regular sessions was led by Almaz Sharman, president of the Academy of Preventive Medicine of Kazakhstan. He underscored the importance of using medical experts instead of biased sources in covering the Covid-19 pandemic.

Watch it here in [Russian](#).



Badakshan University Students Complete SPCE Entrepreneurship Training

On Jan. 11th 2021, 23 entrepreneurship programme graduates received their certificates of completion from UCA's SPCE learning centre in Faizabad, Afghanistan. The 23 students (15 women, 8 men) are majoring in Economics from Badakshan University. Within a month, these young entrepreneurs had acquired the self-confidence and skills to organise and develop their own businesses.



A new batch of SPCE-Afghanistan's entrepreneurship training graduates with their certificates of completion.



SPCE-Afghanistan entrepreneurship training graduate Mitra Khan Mohammad proudly displays her new products.



SPCE Graduates Thank Teachers

Faculty often celebrate a graduation by offering refreshments to the graduates. In a new twist to this custom, 14 graduates of the English Programme in Faizabad, Afghanistan, arranged an appreciation ceremony and banner for the faculty and staff.

The Faizabad Learning Centre started in September 2018, and to date over 2500 students have attended the English and Entrepreneurship Programmes.

“Studying at SPCE Gave me Self Confidence”



Shoaliev Tazarfegim taking part in the Global Encounters Program in Kenya, Africa.

Studying at UCA’s SPCE for four years was “a big step” that paid off tremendously for Shoaliev Tazarfegim, 17, a student in Lyceum 2 for gifted children in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Shoaliev took the Academic Achievement Program and Cambridge English Language courses at SPCE, which, she said, “led me to success and confidence in myself and my strengths.” She also improved her English, math, logic, communication, and leadership skills, which opened up “a lot of opportunities.”

In 2019, she participated in the Global Encounters Program in Kenya, Africa, where she met people from 30 countries, and immersed herself in leadership, culture, and service projects. “I shared my culture and traditions as well, and learned a great deal about diversity and pluralism.”

“SPCE has qualified teachers and is equipped with modern technology, which enables students to gain knowledge not only theoretically, but also practically,” said Shoaliev, who is now studying for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and looks forward to her graduation in 2021.

Logo Competition for the Entrepreneurship Centre



In anticipation of the establishment of SPCE’s Centre for Entrepreneurship in Naryn, a logo competition was launched among the students and alumni of SPCE. Savob Davronov’s design won first place. He studies Computer Security at the Khorog State University in Tajikistan. In his design he combined three major elements into one: “The rhombus symbolizes an upward movement and a peak of intellectual characteristics; the tree represents growth and fertility; and the diagram is a symbol of striving to achieve your goals day by day.”

After the first Centre is established in Naryn sometime in April 2021, a second one is anticipated in Khorog. The Centers aim to create an open public dialogue with potential entrepreneurs for the development and launch of new businesses. The goal is to inspire and transform the community into entrepreneurial thinkers and business creators. It will be an innovation hub where ideas, resources, and technology meet to create the future.

Pathways to Innovation

Strengthening Individual and Organisational Skills

Afghanistan and Central Asia face serious climatic and economic challenges. A three-year partnership with the International Development Research Centre, the University of Central Asia, and the Aga Khan Foundation Canada focused on innovative and hands-on research and training to strengthen individual and organisational skills in math, environmental science and economic policy in Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

“Pathways to Innovation” trained teachers in Afghanistan in effective math and gender-responsive pedagogies. The programme also enhanced scientific teaching and climate change research in Afghan and Tajik universities, with a special focus on advancing women scientists. Lastly, it built the capacity of officials and civil society organisations to use research in analysis of economic policy issues.

Through this programme:

- Over 500 key actors across all three countries are being engaged in policy discussions through roundtables and public lectures;
- More than 100 learners across all three countries are being reached through masters and certificate programmes in economic policy at UCA;



In Ishkashim, Afghanistan, students work on a mental math lesson at the UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education. Since 2006, more than 150,000 students (53% women) have graduated from SPCE, completing programmes from 450 available training modules throughout Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Afghanistan.

- 20 learners – seven of them female – are being reached through UCA's natural resource management certificate programme;
- More than 1,000 education stakeholders are being trained on new gender-responsive pedagogies, which will contribute to improved educational outcomes for over 50,000 Afghan students;
- 172 Afghan Teacher Training College students, 77 percent of them female, are being trained on improved skills for teaching mental math;
- 127 researchers, 50 percent of them female, across all three countries are working on 12 research projects related to sustainable agriculture and natural resource management.

CSI Documents Covid-19 Impact on Kyrgyzstan

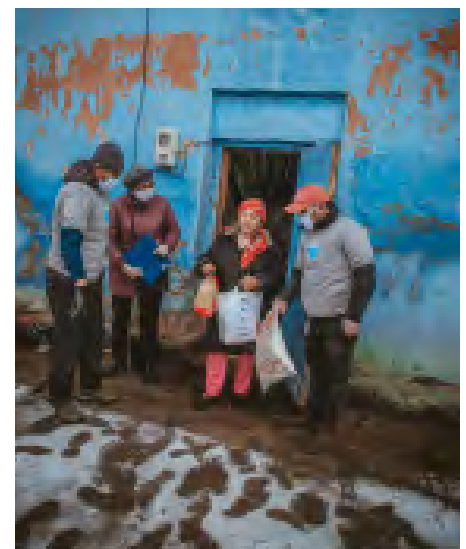
UCA's Civil Society Initiative (CSI) has launched "Covid: A Narrative History, a project documenting the impact, challenges, and responses to the Covid-19 pandemic in Kyrgyzstan."

The pandemic gave rise to an intense public discussion in the mainstream media as well as social media channels on a variety of issues related to the coronavirus experience, including the actions and policies of public authorities. The activation of self-help groups, community organizations, volunteers, civil society organizations, and NGOs occurred on a scale never seen before.

This CSI project, launched in mid-July, supports leading journalists in conducting interviews, collecting information and

materials in various formats from a wide range of societal actors for a narrative history that helps individuals and society understand the sequence of developments, types of problems encountered, and responses from various sectors of society. CSI will publish an e-book with links to audio-visual materials.

With extensive outreach across the region – both rural and urban, CSI aims to facilitate learning networks around key themes of good governance, health, education, rule of law and the environment. Central Asian societies could benefit from greater public awareness and education on the important roles of civil society, taking account of cultural contexts, diversity, and specific demographics.



At the start of the Covid19 pandemic, UCA provided food and medical supplies to 500 families identified by the Mayor's office as being in the vulnerable category in Naryn.

UCA Students Complete WACE Global Collaborative Project

Students from nine universities, including the University of Central Asia, recently participated in a Global Student Collaborative Project (WGSCP) set up by the Canada-based World Association for Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education (WACE).

UCA officially joined WACE as an institutional partner last year. WACE is the only international professional organization dedicated to developing, expanding, branding, and advocating for cooperative and work-integrated education programs within industry and educational institutions.



Last fall WACE announced the WGSCP program in collaboration with Practera, an Australian education technology company. UCA students Khizer Zakir (Earth and Environmental Sciences), Wajahat Khan (Economics), Nina Petrushkova (Computer Science) and Mirzonabot Mirzonabotov

(Computer Science) joined their counterparts from eight countries in connecting with eight organizations to complete their projects. From Nov 16th to Dec 10th, 2020, they worked collaboratively as part of an international, interdisciplinary, and inter-cultural student team and delivered a project for organizations in Australia, Europe, and the United States. The two-week virtual pilot program facilitated by WACE and Practera runs as an extra-curricular activity.

Apply to UCA's Undergraduate Programme

The University of Central Asia is pleased to announce that undergraduate applications are now open for the 2021-2022 academic year. The final deadline to submit the application form ([PDF version](#)) and relevant documents is **March 15th 2021**.

UCA provides high quality education benchmarked at international standards, [full scholarships and grants](#), dedicated and qualified faculty, paid internships to gain work experience, vibrant student life, modern facilities set in a spectacular landscape, and much more.

Majors offered:

Naryn, Kyrgyzstan

Khorog, Tajikistan

Communications and Media

Earth and Environmental Sciences

Computer Science

Economics

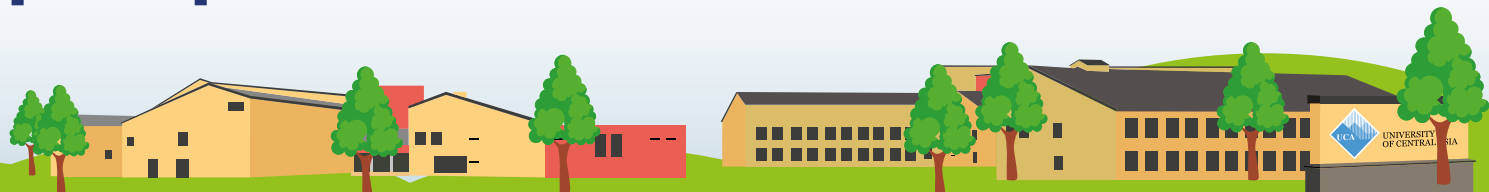
Full scholarships are also awarded to meritorious students from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan on a competitive basis.



Apply to UCA online

<https://www.ucentralasia.org/admissions>

Apply Online or download the [application form](#) and send with supplementary documents by email or in person.



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA

Advancement and Public Affairs
138 Toktogul Street,
720001, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
Tel.: +996 (312) 621 979

PublicAffairs@ucentralasia.org
 facebook.com/ucentraslasia
 twitter.com/ucentralasia
 vk.com/ucentralasia

www.universityofcentralasia.org
 instagram.com/ucentralasia
 youtube.com/user/ucentralasia
 linkedin.com/school/ucentralasia