

Experts Share Research at 8th "Life in Kyrgyzstan" Conference



A panel discussion on "Life in Kyrgyzstan" 2022.

The 8th Annual "Life in Kyrgyzstan" (LiK) conference once again brought together a community of scholars, practitioners, and policy makers to present rigorous evidence-based studies. The three-day conference concluded on 13 October 2022 in Bishkek.

The University of Central Asia's (UCA) Graduate School of Development (GSD) organized

the event jointly with The Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops and the International Security and Development Center. Additional partners of the Conference included the American University of Central Asia, Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund, Mercy Corps, World Bank, and the UN Population Fund.

LiK is a multi-topic longitudinal survey of households and individuals. It has so far tracked data from 3,000 households and 8,000 individuals in all seven oblasts of Kyrgyzstan. The presentations and research shared with the participants brought new insights on a range of social and economic developments in Kyrgyzstan and the Central Asia region. [Continued on page 2](#)

UCA Students Develop Online Booking Platform for Naryn State University

Embracing its vision of benefitting mountain communities through outreach programmes, UCA students have developed a software called *Bookaroom*, which is helping Naryn State University to digitize the process of booking academic classrooms and seminar rooms online.

Under the supervision of Dr Mukhammadmuso Abduzhabbarov, Chair of the Math and Natural Sciences Department at UCA's School of Arts and Sciences, sophomore students Elnazar Uulu, Ilkhomzhon Sidikov, and Baistan Tashkulov, all majoring in Computer Science at UCA, are currently fine tuning the software.

Students working on Bookaroom in UCA's Computer Lab. L to R: Elnazar, Dr Mukhammadmuso, Baistan, and Ilkhomzhon.



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"Life in Kyrgyzstan" Conference



Participants of 8th "Life in Kyrgyzstan" Conference.

The breadth and depth of topics covered in this year's conference incorporated over 20 separate sessions and over 70 papers. Plenary sessions of the conference addressed a range of topics, including social cohesion, household welfare, labour markets, gender and intra-household decision-making, migration and remittances, livelihoods and agricultural market access, export markets, and issues of regional integration, and climate change.

While such survey data is commonplace in advanced economies, the LiK data is unique in Central Asia and rare among less advanced economies. UCA has been and remains deeply supportive of the regular collection of these invaluable data, as well as the annual conferences, which bring to the attention of the international community much about Life in Kyrgyzstan.

UCA Bishkek Staff Train in Effective Emails and Productive Meetings



UCA staff at one of the break-out sessions.

Staff at UCA's Bishkek Office underwent training from October 31 to November 3 on how to write effective emails that get results and save time, as well as conducting meetings that are productive and meaningful. The trainer was Kevin Ottley, Senior Lecturer in English for Academic Purposes at the Khorog Campus.

According to the participants, the sessions were useful and productive and should make the work environment more efficient.

It was noted that too many emails are sent and received each day, and now the staff has new ways of dealing with this challenge. They appreciated how careful planning and writing emails can actually save time, and how to make meetings more productive by preparing efficient agendas.

More such live training sessions are planned in 2023 on topics such as Conflict Resolution and Inter-Cultural Communication.

UCA Research Fellows Contribute to Sustainable Development Goals for Central Asia



Zalina Enikeeva (left) and Marzhan Aikimbaeva, IPPA research fellows.

Marzhan Aikimbaeva and Zalina Enikeeva, research fellows from the Institute of Public Policy and Administration at UCA, participated in the Sixth North and Central Asia Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, organised by UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

The Forum serves as an important platform for Central Asian policymakers and other key stakeholders to share subregional perspectives, discuss collaborative measures to address subregional priorities, and exchange best practices to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

To lead sustainable recovery, policymakers from Central Asian countries were invited to identify challenges and offer feasible strategies. Zalina Enikeeva plans to use the data and findings of the Forum in her work at UCA, and the Civil Society Initiative project, devoted to gender equality. The conclusions and recommendations of the meeting will contribute to the Tenth Asia-Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development of ESCAP, and the 2023 UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

UCA Supports Exhibition on Women Labour in the Tobacco Industry

Tobacco production has been a traditional source of income for farmers in Kyrgyzstan. Growing and producing tobacco is considered dangerous because it often involves the use of hazardous chemicals, nevertheless, many women have worked in tobacco farming from their childhood.

The exhibit "History of Tobacco in Nookat Region: Workforce of Women" opened on October 26th, 2022, at the Nookat District Historical Museum in Osh province. The exhibit has been co-organised by the Nookat Museum and UCA's Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit (CHHU). The exposition highlights the history of tobacco growth in the district by focusing on the lives of women who worked in tobacco production. Artefacts related to the cultivation and processing of tobacco leaves as well as photographs of female labourers and other memorabilia were donated by local families. This exhibit addresses the regional history, closely related to agriculture, and showcas-



Women watch a documentary about the hardships of their fellow workers in the tobacco industry.

es the usually invisible female workforce through photos and videos.

In 2022, CHHU provided practical support for museums based in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. With a goal of boosting museum

activities at a local level, UCA announced a mini-grant competition "Engaging local communities in the creation of museum content". The Nookat District Historical Museum of Osh Province is one of the finalists in this competition.

UCA Supported Documentary Receives Award

The documentary about the history of Cholok-Korgon fortress in Naryn has received an international award. The film is one of eight documentaries "Traces of the Past" devoted to the historical and archaeological heritage of the Naryn region, supported by the Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit (CHHU) of the University of Central Asia.

The film about Cholok Korgon fortress, which was built around the 19th century, was nominated at an international competition "Media-Nauruz" organized by the Altai State University in the Russian Federation. The competition was aimed at promoting the research of specialists of Turkic and Altai history and ethnography. Twenty-two projects from Russia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan competed, and the film about the Cholok-Korgon fortress was recognized as the best. This short documentary highlights the history of the 19th century fortress near the village of Konorchok in Ak-Talaa district of Naryn region.

The TV series "Traces of the Past" by Mirkhamid Toktogulov has been airing on the Kyrgyz National TV since 2014. Aibek Baiymbetov, a research fellow and filmmaker at CHHU, was

the coordinator of the project that contributed to the documentary series and one of the cameramen. The film series on Naryn's historical heritage has been funded by UCA in partnership with the Institute of Strategic Sustainable Development (ISUR). The series called "Culture, History, and Language" has been shown on the Kyrgyz National TV

channel. Since 2014 the program "Traces of the Past" has been exploring the historical and archaeological heritages of Mongolia, Khakassia, Tuva, Buryatia, Altai Republic, and Kyrgyzstan. This was the first regional television project that brought attention to the common cultural and historical heritage of these regions.



Aibek Baiymbetov, CHHU's research fellow

UCA Assists in Piloting German Weather Model for Central Asia

Dr Erkin Isaev, MSRI's research fellow, participated in a seminar organised by the German Weather Service and the World Bank to test the Numerical Weather Prediction model ICON in the Cloud. This model has been successfully tested on a Central Asian domain but without the engagement of the Central Asian National Meteorological and Hydrological Service. The German Weather Service held training for 20 Central Asian representatives in Germany from October 12-14, 2022.

According to Dr Isaev, who was a co-coach during the seminar, this trip provided a unique opportunity to engage in cutting-edge innovation in numerical weather prediction. The icosahedral non-hydrostatic model ICON was initially developed by the German Weather Service and the Max-Planck-Institute for Meteorology as a numerical weather prediction and climate modelling framework. The ICON model is now used operationally by numerous regional and national meteorological services. The German Weather Service has been



Dr Erkin Isaev, MSRI Fellow, presenting the ICON model.

supporting national hydrometeorological services worldwide for more than 20 years, including Central Asian counterparts. German regional models are available free of charge for developing countries and univer-

sities, however, the complexity of the ICON model requires technical support. The organisers presented the participants with the economic and technical outcomes using the Cloud of Amazon Weather Service.

UCA Prepares School Students for Science Olympiad



Dr Ian Canlas (right), Senior Lecturer of Science and Chair of the Preparatory Year Programme at UCA, conducted a workshop for Kyrgyz-Turkish High School students in the wet lab at the Naryn Campus.

University of Central Asia's School of Arts and Sciences invited Kyrgyz-Turkish High School students from across Kyrgyzstan for preparation of the International Junior Science Olympiad at Naryn Campus.

Twelve students from Turkish High Schools visited the Naryn Campus in October to use UCA's facilities to prepare for the Olympiad. UCA faculty members also conducted workshops for them. In return, these Turkish High Schools will be providing their computer labs to conduct UCA admissions tests during the student recruitment cycle in 2023.

Silicon Valley Professionals Visit Naryn Campus



David Wise from Facebook shares best practices in the field of software engineering with UCA students.

Within the framework of the Cooperative Education Programme offered for undergraduate students at UCA, Silicon Valley professionals visited the Naryn Campus in October 2022.

David Wise, Software Engineer at Facebook, and Daniel Low, Engineering Manager at Amazon, visited the School of Arts and Sciences campus along with Elaine Young and Fu Ming Young, experts from Incubasia - a software development and training company based in Bishkek.

UCA Students Prepare for International Programming Contest

Undergraduate students at UCA's School of Arts and Sciences are currently preparing for the world's largest, oldest, and most prestigious International Collegiate Programming Contest (ICPC).

In October, students competed against each other to qualify for the University team. UCA also invited students from Naryn State University to be part of the team. Seven teams of three students each have been qualified from UCA and NSU to participate in the quarter-final round to be held in Bishkek in November, where teams from across Kyrgyzstan will be participating.

To help students prepare for the round, UCA faculty has invited software developers and experienced Olympiad trainers, Kylychbek



Students during the Beginners League Selection Round for ICPC at UCA's Naryn Campus.

Uraiymov and Viacheslav Muravev, to conduct intensive bootcamps at the Naryn Campus.

Fond Farewell to Robin Higgins

"It is difficult to sum up my memories and emotions from six and a half years at UCA... My gratitude ripples out to the people, rivers, and mountains of Khorog and Naryn who have nourished my soul over these last years," says Robin Higgins as she resigns her role as Counsellor at the University of Central Asia.

Robin Higgins joined UCA in 2016 and was part of the inauguration of both Campuses in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. She was a valuable member of the core team responsible for designing and implementing the Counseling department and programmes at UCA's School of Arts and Sciences. "The

richest part of my experience has been getting to know and support our amazing UCA students. Every day I would learn new things about their rich cultural backgrounds and coping skills. Many of our students feel a deep responsibility to complete their educational journeys so they can help their families, communities, and countries."

UCA extends deepest gratitude to Robin Higgins for her remarkable service and dedication to the University. Over the years, Robin's collaborative initiatives and unique approach to problem-solving have endeared her to students, faculty, and staff alike, who wish her the very best in her future endeavors.



Robin Higgins (left) during a counselling session with a student.

UCA Scholar Gives Presentation on Extent of Permafrost in the Pamirs



Maqsd Suriev proudly displays his award-winning poster on permafrost research in the Pamirs.

Maqsd Suriev, UCA's Central Asian Faculty Development Programme (CAFDP) Fellow pursuing his doctoral studies at Simon Fraser University (SFU), presented his current research on "Regional Assessment of Permafrost Distribution in the Pamir Mountains in Tajikistan" at the 2022 Northern Yukon Permafrost Conference at Dawson City, Canada. The presented work won 2nd place in a doctoral-level poster competition awarded by the Canadian Permafrost Association.

His current research on understanding the distribution of permafrost in the Pamir Mountains and their possible relationship with cryospheric hazards in the alpine region, is also affiliated with the University of Central Asia (UCA) under co-supervision of Prof. Roy Sidle, director of UCA's Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI).

UCA Supports Project Devoted To “Bata”



The tradition of giving "bata" is an important spiritual practice that accompanies every important event in the life of a Kyrgyz.

An exhibition of applied art “Kyzdyn sebi – enenin onoru” (A Girl’s Dowry Reflects Her Mother’s Skill) has opened at the Centre of Nomadic Civilization named after Kurmanjan Datka (Ornok village, Issyk Kul region), on 31 October 2022.

This exhibit is the first event of the project “Ak Bata: Bataluu el – baktlyuu” (Blessings Bring Prosperity to the People) researching the traditions of blessing-giving in Kyrgyz culture. Bata, or a blessing in Kyrgyz lan-

guage, is an important ritual and an intangible heritage of the Kyrgyz people. Since ancient times, blessings and well-wishes given by wisemen and women, saints, thinkers, elders, and parents were highly valued as powerful protection from adversity. The tradition of giving bata was an important spiritual practice, accompanying every important event in the life of a Kyrgyz nomad. Unfortunately, blessings are gradually losing their sacred meaning and are being degraded to the level of a party toast.

The Centre of Nomadic Civilization, together with local keepers of traditions, have undertaken research devoted to the types, meanings, and features of bata. This research is aimed at preserving the intangible heritage of the Kyrgyz people and their oral tradition. The exhibit was supported by the Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit of the University of Central Asia as part of the Central Asian Museum Development programme “Engaging Local Communities in the Creation of Museum Content”.



Children from childhood learn to engage in the ritual of "bata"

UCA Researcher Helps Promote Safer Migration

Dr Asel Murzakukova, MSRI Senior Research Fellow participated in the AGRUMIG writing seminar in Marrakesh (Morocco) on October 15-20, 2022. For five days the project team from seven countries (China, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Morocco, Nepal and Thailand) analysed and discussed research outcomes of the AGRUMIG project – ‘Leaving something behind’ – migration governance and agricultural and rural change in ‘home’ communities: Comparative experience from Europe, Asia and Africa. UCA’s Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI) is one of the implementing partners in this international project launched in 2019.

During the seminar in Morocco, Dr Murzakukova presented her paper focused on migration impact on rural change in Batken, Jalal Abad and Kochkor regions of Kyrgyzstan, demonstrating how diverse the effects of migration are on regions and the infrastructural connections to the regions from which migration originates.

According to Dr Murzakulova, the seminar provided a great opportunity to use the qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) method that allows to systematically compare multiple combinations of causes that produce diverse outcomes of migration and

identify patterns and types of situations and dynamics. Based on this comparative analysis, the AGRUMIG project aims to contribute to policies at national and global levels that more effectively combine migration and agricultural/rural change.



Asel Murzakulova (left), in a discussion with colleagues in Morocco.

400 Students Graduate from SPCE



SPCE Graduates proudly pose with their diplomas.

Over 400 students were awarded certificates of completion of SPCE courses in Conversational English, Accounting Technology, Cashier, Business Planning, etc. Certificates were also awarded to students who graduated from Post Training Preparatory Programme, Certified Accounting Practice, Classroom Assessment Techniques, Cybersecurity, Python, Digital Marketing, Grow Your Business, etc. The graduations took place in Dushanbe, Khorog, and Bokhtar.

Students, staff, representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations, community leaders and special guests, gathered to celebrate the young graduates who now begin new chapters in their lives.

"Today, I am very happy, because a few months ago I could not have imagined that these courses would make such a big contribution to the development of my business. I am grateful for the opportunities SPCE has provided in helping me attain important life skills," said Masnavi Silaimonshoev, a graduate of the Digital Marketing and English courses at SPCE.

SPCE Tajikistan has three learning centres in Dushanbe, two in Khorog, one in Khujand and Bokhtar. SPCE Khorog town campus started operation in 2006. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Khorog campus accommodates about 128 apprentices per year and offers workshops

Pamiri Musicians Thrill UCA Students in Khorog



As part of the Cultural Landscape course taught by Dr Chorshanbe Ghoibnazarov, Freshman students at UCA's School of Arts and Sciences in Khorog had an exciting opportunity to meet local musicians and singers. A musical group led by Tawakkal Haydarmamadov conducted a master class on the musical culture of Tajikistan. The group performed various genres of music and shared insights on the significance of music for people of the Pamirs.

and programs on carpentry, masonry, plastering and tile setting, plumbing, and metalworking. Similarly, three more learning centres have been opened in Dushanbe in response to the high demand for SPCE's programmes.

SPCE Helps Asad Wahani Achieve his Dreams

Asadullah Wakhani, 28 years old, is from Wakhan, Badakhshan, Afghanistan. Wakhan is Afghanistan's second largest national park, located 156 kilometers from the UCA's SPCE Training Center in Faizabad. To learn English, Asad specifically moved to Faizabad in 2020. He began learning English at an elementary level and is now about to complete the upper-intermediate level.

According to Asad, his main goal to learn English at SPCE was to speak well and communicate fluently. "I now have a lot of English-speaking friends," Asad shares his joy.

Asad's second goal was to open an English language center for Wakhan's youth who have limited opportunities. This goal has also been achieved, and Asad is running two English language centers: one in the village of Qazdia, the other in the village of Pakish in Wakhan district. Asad was helped in this endeavour



Asadulla (fourth from right) with his English students.

by Wakhan residents and one of his foreign friends who originally visited Wakhan as a tourist. "I have enrolled 100 students (40 men and 60 women), and the lessons are provided free of charge. I only pay the instructors, the venue is also free with no rent," Asad says of the cost of operating the language centers.

Asad's third goal is to work as a tourist guide. Thanks to the SPCE course, his English is now good enough to talk to foreign tourists and share the beauty and history of Wakhan. He has also started his own humanitarian NGO - Corridor Natural Habitat, to serve the Wakhan community.

How to Study for a Free PhD with the Help of UCA



Aikerim Kargazhanova at the University of Cambridge.

By Aikerim Kargazhanova, fourth-year doctoral student, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

Choice of program

In 2017 I enrolled in a master's in education at the University of Cambridge, where I rooted my desire to further pursue a PhD. My family could not afford to pay for a PhD, so the first thing I did was to look for scholarships.

The Scholarship Program of the University of Central Asia (UCA) immediately interested me because it covered all the costs of education, accommodation, visa, health insurance and flight to England.

In addition, the program provides a unique opportunity to become part of the rapidly developing UCA and contribute to the development of Central Asia. The scholarship is part of UCA's Central Asian Faculty Development Program (CAFDP). An added bonus, unlike other scholarship programs, is that there is no need to mortgage your assets or look for guarantors.

How do I get a scholarship?

Applications are accepted from citizens of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

The process of getting a scholarship is divided into several important stages. At the initial stage, the applicant must submit the necessary documents to UCA. Next, a committee considers your application form and invites you for an interview. Those who pass the preliminary selection can apply to the University of Cambridge by December 1.

The documents required for the scholarship program are few: CV, copy of passport, transcripts and diplomas, a short essay, and a brief description of your future research topic. An excellent command of English is important: an IELTS score of 7.5 (at least 7.0 on each individual component) or a TOEFL score of 110 (25 on each component).

More information about the scholarship program can be found at: <https://bit.ly/uca-cambridge22>.

Zwahlen Lecture on Renewable Energy



Dr Robert Zwahlen, a world-renowned environmental and social impact assessment expert, delivering a Public Lecture at Khorog Campus on the issue of energy transition - away from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources – as an important contribution to climate change mitigation. During the lecture, an important issue about the sustainability of these resources was also discussed. Dr Zwahlen is also part of the social and environmental impact assessment team for the Pamir Hydropower Project implemented by Pamir Energy in GBAO, Tajikistan.

French and German Ambassadors Visit Naryn Campus

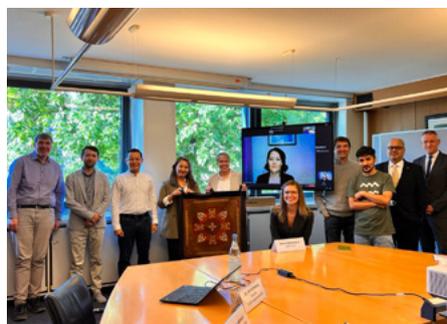


French Ambassador, François Delahousse (3rd from right), and German Ambassador, Gabriela Guellil (2nd from right), along with Dr Barkat Fazal (3rd from left), Diplomatic Representative of the Aga Khan Development Network to Kyrgyzstan, on a tour of UCA's Naryn Campus.

The delegation showed keen interest in UCA's activities in the region, had conversations with faculty and students, and expressed admiration for the Aga Khan Development Network's investment in the development of mountain communities in Central Asia.

UCA-DAAD Fellows Present Their Research Project

On September 22, UCA and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) had a joint review meeting, where UCA-DAAD scholarship holders Qutbudin Ishanch (2nd from left), Samat Turdumamatov (3rd from left), Salima Bekbolotova (on screen), Muslim Bandishoev (4th from right), Ramazan Ali Bahrami (3rd from right) presented their PhD research proposals in Germany.



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