

## AKDN Agency Heads Meet New Naryn Governor



At the meeting with the Naryn Governor (L to R): Davlatsulton Dorgabekova, Dr. Sohail Naqvi, Altaf Hashim (AKDN), Dr. Barkat Fazal, and Governor Altynbek Ergeshov.

On July 18, 2022, the heads of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) agencies in Kyrgyzstan met with Mr. Altynbek Ergeshov, Presidential Plenipotentiary Representative in Naryn Oblast. The meeting was attended by Dr. Barkat Fazal, Diplomatic Representative of the Aga Khan Development Network in Kyrgyz Republic, Dr. Sohail Naqvi, Rector of the University of Central Asia (UCA), and Ms. Davlatsulton Dorgabekova, Chief Exec-

utive Officer of the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) in Kyrgyzstan.

At the meeting, the AKDN delegation congratulated Mr. Altynbek Ergeshov on his new appointment as Governor of Naryn and wished him much success. The participants discussed current and future areas of collaboration to improve the quality of life in Naryn province. Mr. Altynbek Ergeshov

was briefed on the various activities of AKDN in Naryn, and more broadly Kyrgyzstan, and later also visited UCA's Naryn campus and toured the facilities. He said that the opening of the University of Central Asia in Naryn opens broad social, economic, intellectual, and cultural opportunities for residents of the region, and he looks forward to close collaboration and partnership with UCA and other agencies of AKDN.

## New Dean at UCA Graduate School of Development



The University of Central Asia (UCA) is pleased to announce the appointment of Professor Christopher (Chris) Gerry as Professor and Dean of the Graduate School of Development, effective from 1st August 2022. Professor Gerry looks forward to developing a deeper knowledge of the University's programmes and activities and getting to know his new colleagues over the next few weeks.

Prior to joining UCA, Professor Gerry was Professor of Russian and Eurasian Political Economy, Director of Russian and East Eu-

ropean Studies (2018), Head of Oxford School of Global and Area Studies (OSGA), Professor of Public Health and Health Economics of Eastern Europe and Eurasia, Dean (2018) and Governing Fellow (2017) of St Antony's College, University of Oxford. In total, Professor Gerry has over 21 years of experience working in senior leadership roles in the international higher education sector in the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation. This includes 5 years as Deputy Director of the International Laboratory of Economics of

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Healthcare Reform in Moscow. Professor Gerry has strong interests in issues of development in the wider European region and has published on inequality, poverty, health economics, social policy, gender, and the labour market. Some of Professor Gerry's significant achievements have been his development of new and very successful study programmes, including an Erasmus Mundus Masters Consortium and a Bachelor's in History, Politics and Economics at UCL; a dual Masters in Comparative Politics at HSE; and, more recently, a Masters in Global and Area Studies at Oxford. He hopes to have a similar impact at UCA's Graduate School of Development.

Professor Gerry has a PhD in Economics (2003), University of Essex, Department of Economics

MA in Political Economy, Merit (1997)  
University of East Anglia

BSc in Economics, First Class (1996),  
University of East Anglia, Diploma in On-  
line Learning and Education, Distinction  
(2004), UCL Institute of Education.

Please join us in warmly welcoming Pro-  
fessor Christopher Gerry and his family  
to Bishkek and UCA.

## Dr. Bohdan Krawchenko to Serve as Advisor to UCA Rector



Following Dr. Bohdan Krawchenko's decision to step down as Dean of the Graduate School of Development (GSD), the University of Central Asia is pleased to announce that he will continue to serve as Senior Research Fellow at GSD and Advisor to the Rector. In the capacity as Advisor, Dr Krawchenko will continue to serve as a valued member of the Senior Management Team and provide support to the University on matters of institutional and academic development.

Dr. Bohdan Krawchenko joined UCA in August 2004 as Dean of the Graduate Program. In May 2012 he was appointed Director General of UCA, and in August 2018 reverted to serving as Dean of GSD. In all of these senior positions Dr. Krawchenko has played a significant role in shaping the growth and development of UCA.

## UCA Rector Receives Award from Kyrgyz Minister of Education



Almazbek Beishenaliev (centre), Kyrgyz Minister of Education, pins the award on UCA Rector, Professor Sohail Naqvi.

The Minister of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, Almazbek Beishenaliev, awarded the Rector of the University of Central Asia, Professor Sohail Naqvi, with the "Excellence in Education" Award on July 12, 2022. It was presented for contributions to the formation, development, and advancement of the University of Central Asia, and its initiatives for helping to reform the higher education system in Kyrgyzstan.

Departmental awards of the Ministry of Education and Science (a badge is attached to the title of "Excellence in Education") are given to people who have made a great contribution to the development of the educational sphere. It is a way to assess, recognize and encourage their merits.



The Tajik and Kyrgyz delegation representing the Khorog Urban Resilience Programme and the Naryn Urban Resilience Program at the World Urban Forum in Katowice, Poland, 28-30 June 2022. Naryn and Khorog were the only cities from Central Asia represented at the Forum.

Urban Resilience Programmes in Naryn and Khorog aim to enhance the capacity of municipalities in these two cities to use advanced town planning techniques to inform infrastructure investments and community engagement efforts.



Dr. Kemal Toktomushev (2nd from right), Sr Research Fellow at UCA's Institute of Public Policy and Administration, speaking at a high-level event hosted by the European People's Party Group Coordinator for Foreign Affairs MEP Michael Gahler. This event at the European Parliament in Brussels brought together 35 experts from institutions of the European Union, academia, and think tanks. Participants discussed regional engagement and Central Asia's rising relevance for Europe.

## UCA Researchers at International Workshop in Bishkek

UCA strives to provide the best possible education in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) for their students. STEM disciplines are a cornerstone for tackling some of the pressing challenges of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and creating more inclusive and sustainable societies. This requires faculty members and researchers to constantly work on their curriculum.

With these objectives in mind, UCA representatives, Dr. Saltanat Mambetova, Assistant Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences at the School of Arts and Sciences, and Dr. Erkin Isaev, Research Fellow at UCA's Mountain Societies Research Institute, participated in a joint workshop on "Modernizing Curriculum towards the Goals of UN SDGs for Central Asian Universities: Climate Action and Sustainability Development".



*Participants at the opening ceremony of the Workshop.*

The workshop (June 12-19, 2022) brought together representatives from ten Central Asian universities to discuss how UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can lead to curriculum transformation and enhance learning capacities of students, along with research capacities of the faculty. The workshop covered issues in ecology and GIS, land cover and land use in science, research design in sustainable development, climate science and climate interventions.

## Impact of Irrigation Canals in Southern Kyrgyzstan

In the rural south of the Kyrgyz Republic, agriculture is the main source of livelihood for the population. However, development of agriculture is adversely impacted by dry climate with limited precipitation during vegetation period. As a result, farmers depend heavily on irrigation canals for their water supply.

The University of Central Asia (UCA) has released a study by two researchers, Dr. Kanat Tilekeyev and Dilbara Kirbasheva, both from the Institute of Public Policy and Administration, that examines the connections between investments in irrigation networks and higher crop output of small farmers. The study is based on a series of surveys conducted during 2016-2019, that included 740 households from Batken and Osh oblasts. In total, 19 villages of Batken and Osh oblasts were covered by the surveys.

The authors studied rehabilitation of three irrigation canals in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan, focusing on Batken and Osh regions. These irrigation canals are situated in cross-border regions that are prone to water conflicts when the irrigation period starts in April.

The Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan share about 40 canals, which start in one country and flow to another. Farmers living downstream experience a shortage of water, complain about the extensive use of water by farmers living upstream of the water source. Moreover, the water infrastructure on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border is aging and does not work at full capacity, resulting in considerable water losses. Potentially, improving the infrastructure might lead to reducing conflicts related to the use and management of irrigation water and pastures in both countries.

The study looks at a combination of factors that form intricate relationships in the studied communities, including poverty and income levels, and contribution of migration and remittances to income levels.

The authors of the study were also interested in how water disputes are being resolved when they take place. The paper shows an important role of *aiyl okmotu*, rural government administration, and water-user associations (WUAs) in water disputes. According to the authors, "the WUAs is the most important institution in resolving water disputes". However, *aksakals*, elderly or respectable people in rural communities, and district irrigation departments, were also considered important by the respondents.

The project was funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom, and the Aga Khan Foundation in Kyrgyz Republic (AKF KG). The research component of the project entailed an impact evaluation of irrigation canals rehabilitation, which was implemented by the Institute of Public Policy and Administration of the University of Central Asia.

The paper is available for free download at UCA's website: <https://bit.ly/IPPA-WP69>



*A view of the water intake structure of the Ak-Tatyr canal, Kyrgyzstan.*

## Pulat Shozimov: Evolution of AKHP



"I believe AKHP's most important achievement in all the years of its development is its enormous contribution to the development of Central Asia's human capital" – says Pulat Shozimov, UCA's Senior Research Fellow, who joined the Aga Khan Humanities Project in 1997.

### How did AKHP come about?

The Aga Khan Humanities Project for Central Asia was founded in 1997, although preparations for it began in 1995. The idea to establish AKHP arose following the signature of a memorandum of agreement between His Highness the Aga Khan and Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon in May 1995.

A preliminary proposal was produced by Dr. Rafique Keshavjee (AKHP's first director) and Azim Nanji at Florida State University, and presented at an international conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Bishkek in 1995. The project and its ideas for an interdisciplinary humanities course, based on a cross-cultural approach, were well received by the participants at this conference, who suggested implementing it in the context of Central Asia. This idea found support in Tajikistan, not only from the government, but also from academics, intellectuals, and creative people that met in Dushanbe in 1998 to discuss AKHP.

I joined AKHP in 1997, you might say from the moment it started out, when the strategy for creating AKHP's curriculum material was just being developed, and the logistics of the Project's development, a list of partner uni-

versities, and the risks and opportunities of implementing the Project in practice on three levels (ideas, pedagogy and assessment) were being defined. I joined a team that had already started working on the Project.

### What problems did the Project face in those early days?

The problems were linked to the fact that we were simultaneously creating, piloting, and assessing materials that were based on completely new academic and pedagogical principles, and not on strict academic standards of bringing theoretical problems and issues closer to our reality and to an interactive dialogue with students.

The next question was where to test them out – at a university or at the AKHP HQ? What kind of students did we need for this testing? We decided we needed to select the best students and teaching them would be a theoretician – me – and a music practitioner – Lola Pulatova, a well-known piano composer in Tajikistan. We focused more on eliciting profound new questions from the students in the classes than on obtaining their answers. For us, the objective was that if a student came up with even one serious question for themselves, we would have to some extent achieved the Project's overall goal.

### How have you led AKHP to its many successes?

First and foremost, I want to highlight the teamwork involved in achieving the goals. In addition, everything depended on the Project's initial goals, principles and philosophy.

This, believe me, provided a powerful impetus for growth.

I have been able to work at the Project at practically every level, from teaching and piloting AKHP's curriculum material – to curriculum developer.

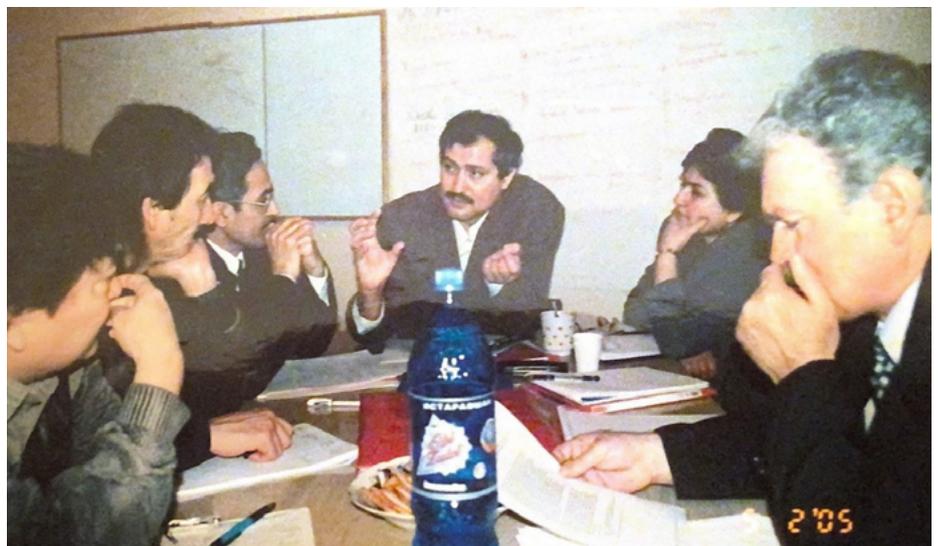
I would like to note that I have acquired all my technical, management, and intellectual skills from the Aga Khan Humanities Project. They are still helping me to address the Project's aims and objectives.

### What are some of AKHP's main achievements?

The Project's primary main achievement is the fact that after 25 years its courses are still in demand, and today AKHP has many loyal and dedicated teachers in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan.

Its second achievement, I think, is to have created the first eight-volume interdisciplinary course, based on AKHP's initial experiences (the first stage of AKHP's development from 1997 to 2003) and to have implemented it on the basis of our faculty development training, with curriculum material linked to the innovative interactive pedagogy (the second stage of AKHP's development, from 2004 to 2012).

The third achievement is that the Project has managed to ensure a systemic development of all the main components of an effective education cycle: specifically, it has connected intellectuals, teachers and students. Based on this, we have created an intellectual commu-



*Pulat Shozimov (centre) leading a group discussion on AKHP's Curriculum Materials.*

### ‘The Needs and Litany: A Tajik Edition of Mubārak-i Wakhānī’s Hājāt va Munājāt’

Author: Abdulmamad Iloiev

Editor in-Chief: Elmira Köchümkulova

Mubārak-i Wakhānī (d. 1903) was by far the most productive author in nineteenth-century Badakhshan. Andrey Bertels once observed that Wakhānī was ‘the Avicenna of Badakhshan’, whose intellectual accomplishments exceeded the limits of his geographic and intellectual environment. Examination of Wakhānī’s works reveals that he was well grounded in the Persian and Arabic languages, the religious sciences, poetry, astronomy, music and art. His intellectual legacy includes over sixteen titles covering a wide array of topics, which seek to establish a state of equilibrium between Ismaili and Sufi ideas expressed in the finest mystical spirit. Most of the original manuscripts are kept in his museum in Tajikistan, but also in the private collections of his relatives in Tajik and Afghan Badakhshan. The manuscripts have leather bindings and are relatively well preserved. He produced his own papers using special techniques and tools.

Download Publication in Tajik:

<https://bit.ly/CHHUIloiev0622>



*Pulat Shozimov and UCA's School of Arts and Sciences students - winners of the AKHP debate tournament are celebrating the successful finish of the competition.*

nity, through the AKHP Public Lecture Series (since 2012), a network of teachers, based on the faculty development training (since 1997), and finally the AKHP Debate Club (since 2012) and the innovative Cross-Debate Format, based on cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary approaches (the third stage of AKHP’s development, from 2013 to 2021).

The fourth achievement is that from 2022 new focuses have been identified for AKHP’s development for the coming years — digitizing AKHP’s curriculum material and its pedagogy.

#### Could you share some of your fond early memories?

One of my best early memories, of course, is the creative atmosphere that existed at the Project from 1997 to 2003, and the people who supported me. After all, it is thanks to them that I have achieved what I have. The unforgettable initial discoveries of what I could do in practice, as well as the creation of a new environment through educational tools and products. Today our courses are taught in 87 academic institutions through over 2000 teachers, and over 180,000 learners have taken AKHP courses.

## SAS Provides Training for NSU Students

Following a Memorandum of Cooperation signed by the Computer Science Departments of the University of Central Asia (UCA) and Naryn State of University (NSU) in May 2022, UCA’s School of Arts and Sciences conducted a month-long training on the Internet of Things (IoT) for NSU students.

Dr Dmytro Zubov, Associate Professor at UCA, supervised the students introducing them to the field of IoT, along with providing consultations for their academic projects.

The MoU represents UCA’s ongoing commitment to the development of mountain communities. Both parties have agreed to contribute to the implementation of educational investments in the field of Information and Communications Technology, attract modern technologies to the Naryn region, and exchange experience and information.



*Dr. Zubov working with NSU students in the Computer Hardware Lab at the UCA Campus.*

## Summer School Brings New Learning to Naryn Schoolchildren

During June and July 2022, the School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) in Naryn completed its "Summer School 2022" program.

In addition to fun and games, learning English, and performing in a Talent Show, the 85 participants, 15 of whom were from vulnerable families, worked with great interest on the tasks of mastering Microsoft Office software. During the Summer School the students increased their fluency of English, strengthened teamwork, networking, and gained leadership and soft skills. At the end of the program the children successfully passed their final exams and received certificates.



*Summer School Programme students joyfully show their completion certificates.*

## SPCE Khorog Trains Electricians of Pamir



*A trainee electrician demonstrates his new knowledge.*

To enhance local capacity to design, implement, and manage renewable energy resources, UCA's SPCE in partnership with AKF and USAID's Local Impact project designed and piloted certified technical training for electricians.

During the six-month period from December 2021 to June 2022, 14 participants were trained in the repair, installation, and maintenance of electrical equipment, electricity generation, and maintenance of electrical power distribution infrastructure.

The group consisted of 9 mid-level specialists from the Pamir Energy Company, and 5 participants from the marginalized segment of GBAO's population with no postsecondary education. Special attention was given to female applicants and people with partial disabilities during the selection process.

Of the 14 participants, 12 successfully passed all exams and internship assignments and are now classified as third category electricians.

## SPCE Tekeli Takes Active Role in Public Service Projects



*Special trainers help develop artistic talents in children with disabilities.*

In July 2022, UCA's Tekeli office of the School of Professional and Continuing Education collaborated with a Kazakh public association "Altyn Adam Zhetysu Crafts Center" to launch a charity project "Mamania Art School", a social initiative with free tuition for children with disabilities. The opening ceremony was attended by Tekeli Akim Batyr Moldahmetov, Deputy Akim for Social Affairs Bauyrzhan Tegelbaev, and representatives of the social programs department.

Through this joint 11-month project children with disabilities are receiving training in drawing, decorating, patchwork, sculpting, toy sewing, felting, and other crafts. They are being taught by craftsmen, some of whom also have disabilities. By example, the trainers are demonstrating to the 30 participants that despite limitations it is possible to achieve their dreams and goals.

# UCA Concludes Digital Sustainability Training



Students at the Digital Sustainability Program with their certificates of completion. Kutnaeva Nuria Asylbekovna (11th from left in first row).

Concluding the Digital Sustainability Training Programme within the framework of “Leaders in Digital Resilience” project, the University of Central Asia’s School of Arts and Sciences held a ceremony on May 27, 2022, awarding certificates to the participants in the presence of Kutnaeva Nuria Asylbekovna, Director of the State Agency for the Protection of Personal Data under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic. The project is supported by the World Bank Korea Partnership Fund.

The Programme has an overall development goal of strengthening the ability of the Kyrgyz Republic to understand, detect, monitor,

and effectively respond to cyber threats and become a regional leader in digital resilience and data protection as a continuation of the Digital CASA project.

The project provides high priority training programmes for government, private sector, and civil society stakeholders in the country. This Programme will form the basis for the future expansion of the initiative at the regional level by fostering collaboration with the universities in the region to provide intellectual input to the curriculum development of the proposed Central Asian Digital Resilience Academy (CADRA).

With support from the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, there were 99 state and municipal employees nominated for the training. Out of which, 72 participants completed the Data Privacy Module training, 55 completed the Cyber Security course, and 57 finished the Business Continuity and Recovery of Operations course. Some participants took multiple courses.

Additionally, UCA also organised a knowledge sharing event with representatives from civil society and the private sector on topics of Cybersecurity, Data Privacy, and Business Continuity.

## CHHU Publication for Free Download

### Short Creative Essays

#### Cultural Production Series: Cultural Heritage of Central Asia

**Author:** Ykybal Aidarova

**Editor in-Chief:** Elmira Köchümkulova

To revitalize the cultural and historical heritages of Central Asia and advance UCA’s mission on cultural heritage preservation in the region, the Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit (CHHU) initiated a new, Cultural Production Series which aims to explore creative ways of engaging with cultural heritage using multi-media tools and digital technology. The Series produces three types of cultural products: short films (5-10 minutes) focusing on cultural traditions and practitioners, musical performances combining music, theatre and fashion, and creative short essays about cultural traditions and lifeways of mountains communities of Central Asia. CHHU collaborates with young and creative Central Asians (writers, poets, journalists, musicians, artists, and film makers) to produce these cultural products and present them to wider audiences. This first issue of the creative short essays presents essays written by Ykybal Aidarova, a young and talented journalist from Kyrgyzstan.

Download Publication in English or Kyrgyz: <https://bit.ly/CHHU-e-series-1>



## Young Entrepreneurs Learn Business Fundamentals at NCE



A student presenting her business ideas for a tourist guest house in Naryn.

At the Naryn Centre for Entrepreneurship (NCE), 40 participants completed the Entrepreneurship Training Program. This was the third cohort attending the entrepreneurship training program, which took place between April and June 2022.

During the twelve-week program, participants had the opportunity to launch or improve their businesses through twelve training modules, such as market research, customer journey mapping, business and financial modeling, marketing simulation, and accounting.

The NCE was established in 2021 focusing on the need for creating job opportunities in mountain communities. It provides Expert Entrepreneurship and Business Incubation programmes to teach students advanced business concepts, including leadership and management, along with providing them with workspace, mentorship support, and networking opportunities. From October 2021 through July 2022, 120 young entrepreneurs, including those from vulnerable social groups in Naryn province, participated.

## From Unemployed to Master with Help from SPCE



Students learning the basics of electronics.

Within the framework of the UCA SPCE Local Impact: A Transformative Partnership in Asia and Africa, in July 2022, a technical training for the preparation of specialists in repair of household appliances, cell phones and IT

equipment was launched at the vocational education institution of SPCE in Khorog, Tajikistan.

Two groups of 15 people, with a special focus on vulnerable populations from Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast, were involved in the training. Special priority was announced for female participants and people with partial disabilities. Upon completion of the course, trainees received the qualification of "Master" in repairing household appliances, cell phones and IT equipment. The program was developed in accordance with the state standard of the Republic of Tajikistan for the training of intermediate level specialists.

### Call for Participation Live-Streamed Courses in Economics

- Environmental Economics
- Energy Economics
- Electricity Markets
- International Trade
- Modeling Macroeconomics
- Innovation Economics
- Public Policy

Free of charge  
Conducted online in English



The University of Central Asia's (UCA) Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA), in cooperation with the Center for Economic Research and Graduate Education's Economics Institute (CERGE-EI) Foundation, invites all master level students, faculty members, applied researchers, and other interested individuals to participate in a live-streamed economics course starting in September 2022. Courses will be delivered online from CERGE-EI's Digital Media Center in Prague and coordinated by UCA from Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan to allow live streaming to multiple locations. Teaching Assistants from UCA will also provide basic assistance in course delivery.

#### Costs and Tuition Fees

Courses are offered free of charge to course participants from Central Asian countries.

#### Language

The language of instruction for all courses offered by the CERGE-EI Foundation is English.

#### Registration

The number of places is limited. To register for a course, please fill in the registration form by August 25, 2022, at the link below: <https://forms.office.com/r/7zWfeyTTT>

Please see the full description of the Programme on UCA's website: <https://bit.ly/LSCE22FA>

### UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA

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

[PublicAffairs@ucentralasia.org](mailto:PublicAffairs@ucentralasia.org)  
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